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EDITORIAL

MORALS FOR THE NEW YEAR

The News of the Week in Review:

Item 1. In the beginning was the Terror. Claire Sterling beheld it (in *Reader's Digest*), Marvin Kalb broadcast it (on NBC-TV) and William Safire wrote about it (in his *New York Times* column). Yuri Andropov, head of it, told the Bulgarian secret police, who instructed a ticket agent for the Bulgarian airlines, who enlisted Turkish Gray Wolf Mehmet Ali Agca in a plot. Agca fired a bullet which failed to kill Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father recovered but his powers failed. It was then, according to Safire, that night fell on Poland. Revolution triumphed in Latin America. Vatican banks went broke. Bishops rallied against nuclear war. Yasir Arafat entered Rome. Moral: you can't understand the world if you don't read *Reader's Digest*.

Item 2. The Pentagon sprang a leak and was about to sink. Polygraph tests were proposed for a million potential snitches. Government leakers (e.g., Assistant Secretary of Defense Richard Perle) sought to shoot down their own leakees (Assistant Secretary of State-designate Richard Burt). The Senate has so far concurred. Next, reporters who gathered for an informational briefing at the Pentagon were obliged to swear an oath that they would keep secret whatever brief information they were gathering to report. The Pentagon still floats. Moral: good news is no news.

Item 3. Federal Environmental Protector Anne Gorsuch has been cited by Congress for contemptuously refusing to deliver a pile of papers to a House committee investigating E.P.A. procedures. Gorsuch was said to be protecting the companies that practice wasteful intoxication. Later on she released a list of locations of some of the worst waste sites and they seem to be all around us. Moral: you never know where your next lethal injection is coming from.

PERIODICALS DEPARTMENT

REAGAN'S JUDGES
James A. Goodman

DISPATCHES
Kai Bird
Max Holland

U.S. WAR ON NICARAGUA
Stephen Schlesinger

THE 1982 ELECTIONS
Curtis B. Gans

EASTERN EUROPEAN FICTION
Ivan Sanders

IRVING HOWE
Vivian Gornick

'EVERY AMERICAN PUT AT RISK'

NEW LIGHT ON THE DANGERS OF RADIATION

HARVEY WASSERMAN AND NORMAN SOLOMON

Atomic radiation has become America's most controversial health issue. New charges from a broad cross-section of researchers—along with multimillion-dollar lawsuits from thousands of presumed victims—underscore the fact that a "safe" dose of radiation is as much a myth as a "limited" nuclear war and that virtually every American has been put at risk by bomb-test fallout and reactor emissions.

It has been thirty-seven years since the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. More than 700 atomic tests have taken place on U.S. territory. At least a quarter-million soldiers have been exposed to radiation, as have millions of people living near test areas.

It has also been twenty-four years since the opening of the first American commercial nuclear reactor at Shippingport, Pennsylvania. Seventy-four of its "peaceful atom" offspring are now licensed to operate in this country, and another eighty or so are under construction. Today more than a million Americans work in various parts of the nuclear industry, mining uranium, fabricating fuel rods, making weapons-grade material and operating and repairing power plants.

Indeed, it now seems clear that for at least forty years the true dangers of radiation exposure have been hidden from the public. Scientists supported by corporate and government grants have contended that most forms of exposure are harmless, or fall under a so-called "threshold" of exposure below which there is allegedly no human risk. In 1981 Pentagon general counsel

(Continued on Page 14)

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LETTERS.

ACID RAIN

Washington, D.C.

It seems apparent from his letter [*The Nation*, Dec. 11] that William G. Loftus, senior vice president for public affairs of American Electric Power, either did not read Bob Sherrill's "Reagan Inc. Dumps on Canada" [Sept. 4] or misunderstood it.

Loftus errs in his description of the article. Sherrill *did not* base his assertion that U.S.-Canadian relations are deteriorating due to a lack of U.S. cooperation on acid rain controls "on the simplistic theory that 'chemical pollutants are belched into the atmosphere....'" Loftus simply confuses scientific theory with diplomacy. Actually, Sherrill stated that the United States is undermining relations with Canada with a series of specific actions. It has been documented that the U.S. government has reduced funding for acid rain research and has spurned a Canadian offer for a mutual reduction in emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO_2) and oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) by 50 percent. These actions, and the others Sherrill described, contravene and contradict the memorandum of intent signed by the two governments in 1980 committing them to an effort to control acid rain.

Loftus also parades a series of half-baked scientific references in an attempt to challenge the evidence that acid rain *is* a problem. His intent is transparent, reflecting the utility industry's Chicken-Little-in-reverse approach to this issue: trying to prove the sky isn't falling. The issue for the industry is dollars. If it can "prove" that acid rain is not a problem, then it can avoid the billions in expenditures that it, as the culpable party, should assume for causing the problem.

What are the facts? The National Academy of Sciences has reported that "there is little probability that some factor other than emissions of SO_2 and NO_x is responsible for acid rain." The National Commission on Air Quality found that 80 percent of SO_2 comes from east of the Mississippi River. The L-TRAPS (long-range transport) study by the Office of Technology Assessment (O.T.A.) found that states east of the Mississippi are suffering vast environmental damage due to long-range transport of these pollutants. The Department of Energy report known as the JASON's Study, done by the Stanford Research Institute, stated that if these emissions continue unabated, precipitation in the East will become forty times as acidic as normal. And the recent O.T.A. interim report on acid rain concluded that a linear relationship exists between emissions of SO_2 and NO_x and the occurrence of acid rain. Finally, Lester Lave of Brookings—no friend of the current Clean Air Act—said in his monograph *Clearing the Air*: "Polluters in the Midwest and Ontario must bear the cost of reducing acid precipitation in the northeastern areas of the United States and Canada."

. . . Understanding that both Canada and U.S. plants shoulder the responsibility for the problem (although U.S. plants are responsible for the lion's share), the two nations agreed to the memorandum of intent, which calls for an interim program of reductions, further research and, ultimately, an acid rain treaty. Yet, as Sherrill shows, and as Loftus ignores, the Reagan Administration has been welching on the deal. In 1981 alone, the Environmental Protection Agency boosted allowable emissions for U.S. power plants by a total of 1 million tons. Unless U.S. policy changes, the environmental problem facing the two countries—and the diplomatic impasse which divides them—will worsen.

If Sherrill decides to write about this important subject again, it would be fun for him to explore the lobbying and the disinformation for which groups like the American Electric Power group are responsible. Until then, letters such as the one penned by Loftus should be taken with at least a kilowatt of salt.

David E. Dreyer, Legislative Assistant
for Environmental Affairs
to Representative Toby Moffett

NOBLE IDEA

Cuernavaca, Mexico

Thanks for the two Nobel Prize editorials ["Nobels: Chicago" and "Macondo," *The Nation*, Nov. 6]. The award to García Marquez, enthusiastically welcomed throughout the Third World, does suggest a decline of right-wing considerations in the Swedish Academy's choices. One hopes that this will begin to affect the economic awards, after such a long inning for the Chicago School. *The Nation*'s proposal of Joan Robinson is most timely. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which chooses the economics prize recipients, should recognize by now that more than one exit from the present economic quagmire is on the global agenda. If an award to a Marxist is too much to expect, surely one should go to an economist who knows from profound study what Marxism is all about and treats it with critical respect. Such an economist is Robinson, and all of us who look at the science of economics from the bleachers would stand up and cheer if the Academy crowned her pioneering work with belated laurels. Will not *Nation* readers join in an international campaign to promote her candidacy?

Mary Belfrage
Cedric Belfrage

ISLAM IN TURKEY

Washington, D.C.

I found Joseph B. Treaster's article ["Turkey in the Generals' Hands," *The Nation*, Dec. 11] very interesting; however, he failed to touch upon the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, which just may be the most important element in determining the future of Turkey.

Last May, with some others, I made a 5,000-mile motor tour of that country.... Throughout the trip, we found the mosques of Turkey filled, not only on Fridays, the Islamic holy day, but throughout the week during the times of the five daily prayers. Islam is alive and well in Turkey and will ultimately determine its future.

As pointed out in the article, Turkey earns billions of dollars each year from vast construction projects in the Arab world. This economic tie with the Arabs, along with the fact that Turkey is the only NATO member that maintains friendly relations with Iran, points to the likelihood that in the future, Turkey will find its historical role as an Islamic power more in keeping with its character than any role it can hope to play within the European community.

There is no question in my mind but that the Turkish generals plan to move on the southern half of Cyprus, a move which will once and for all make Turkey's break with the European community complete. Isolated from Europe, Turkey will resume its role as an Islamic power protecting the holy land from foreigners.

Muhammad Tahir
Chief, Washington Bureau
Crescent News & Views

CORRECTING ISAAC

New York City

Rael Jean Isaac in her letter [*The Nation*, Dec. 4] quotes me evidently to bolster her allegations that the U.S. nuclear weapons freeze campaign is somehow a Communist front.

However, she left out one word of my January 30 letter to *The New York Times*, which alters considerably what I said about the World Peace Council. The council requested *higher* status as a nongovernmental organization with the U.N. Economic and Social Council, and it was this request that the W.P.C. eventually decided to withdraw. The W.P.C. still has its original N.G.O. status with the United Nations.

My January letter to *The Times* was to deny the allegations by both the White House and a European correspondent of *The Times* that the W.P.C. was the instigator of the Western European antimissile demonstrations. This letter is to deny Isaac's accusation that the U.S. freeze movement has been stimulated by the W.P.C. To charge such a cause-and-effect relationship is to give the W.P.C. much more power than, in truth, it has—at least in the West.

On the other hand, I must admit that at this moment in history the Soviet Union and its peace movements are generally advocating good nuclear disarmament policies.

Homer A. Jack, Secretary-General
World Conference on Religion and Peace

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EDITORIALS.

Better Not Torture

Every year at Christmas time, Santa Claus of the State Department makes a list of his client regimes, checks it twice and parcels out gifts of war matériel to those who are deemed not too naughty but nice. One check is for blind loyalty to Washington, the other for improvement in human rights. But the rules for certification—as the latter part of the giving process is called—have grown lax with time and the mood of the Reagan Administration; now only the truly awful are deprived.

Certification is usually contingent on purely domestic political pressures. Congressional committees balk at the excesses of this junta or that, and activist groups lobby and demonstrate for arms embargoes. In only one case—Chile—is there significant organized international pressure on the U.S. certification process. Since 1979, the United Nations has mandated a rapporteur to monitor General Pinochet's human rights record. The annual U.N. report not only maintains world pressure on the Chilean regime, it helps prevent the State Department from certifying that country for military largesse.

This year the rapporteur concluded that while human rights in Chile had not deteriorated, neither had they improved. Yet on December 10, when the U.N. Third Committee considered its yearly resolution on Chile, Britain unexpectedly introduced a measure that would in effect have ended the rapporteur's mandate—and the U.N.'s pressure. The Thatcher government seemed to be rewarding Chile for its support in the war over the Falklands. At the same time, Jeane Kirkpatrick was working to exempt America's allied Latin tyrannies from U.N. censure.

The great-power double-team strategy worked in the Third Committee, where the rapporteur's mandate was not

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renewed and the question of continuing it was bucked up to the U.N. Human Rights Commission. But when the matter came to the General Assembly on December 17, Mexico led a lopsided vote of 85 to 17 to restore the mandate. Chile promptly declared the resolution invalid and biased, and announced it would not cooperate with any human rights agencies of international organizations. Now, State Department sources say Chile may not make this year's gift list.

In fact, only the most forgiving patron could find evidence of good behavior in Chile's human rights policies. If acts of unofficial repression—"disappearances," random assassinations, torture—are said to be decreasing, it is only because such practices have been institutionalized under law. It is now "legal" to pick citizens off the streets and detain them in clandestine centers for twenty days; many hundreds have been taken away in recent months. Salaries of physicians who administer electric shock to detainees are legally paid from public funds, and statements extracted by torture are recognized in the courts. It is illegal to question the state about the disappearances or the detention centers. *Habeas corpus* is legally guaranteed in the 1981 Constitution—and legally suspended indefinitely. The police routinely assassinate their enemies in public "shoot-outs," which is now an approved crime-stopping practice.

The reasons for such endemic evil have much to do with the nature of tyranny. But they are compounded by one additional fact: Chile's free-market economy, derived from the theories of economists of the Chicago school, is a shambles. There is widespread discontent, notably among the elements that supported the overthrow of the socialist government of Salvador Allende in 1973. Now, more than ever, the Pinochet regime must impose strict discipline. Now, more than ever, it must be opposed.

Circuit Breaker

The judges nominated by the President to the twelve U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals are of enormous importance. They are lifetime appointees and sit on the court of last resort for the vast majority of litigants, since the Supreme Court accepts only a small percentage of cases appealed to it each year. On important issues of the day, Circuit Court decisions are conclusive unless they are reviewed by the Supreme Court, and when the Justices rule on a broad question, it is the Circuit Courts which interpret and apply the ruling.

President Carter instituted a major reform in the selection of Circuit Court judges by creating citizen panels for each judicial circuit to recommend candidates who have demonstrated a "commitment to equal justice." For the first time, the process was removed from the direct control of party politics and a laudable criterion for evaluating nominees was established. Later on, the Carter panels were also instructed to seek out qualified minority and women candidates, who had been overlooked in the selection process of old.

President Reagan has dismantled the citizen panels and revoked the Carter standards. All that White House counsel Fred Fielding offered in explanation was that the Carter method "didn't really depoliticize the nominating process," "sometimes resulted in delays" and "did not produce judges of higher quality." In its place the Reagan Administration has created a system that combines the worst of party politics and ideological matchmaking. At one end, candidates are recommended through the traditional avenues of patronage. At the other, a Circuit Court search committee at the Justice Department chooses nominees whose judicial philosophies seem to be consistent with Reagan's.

One example of what this process produces is the leading candidate for a vacancy on the Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, New Orleans attorney Benjamin Toledano. He was recommended by an informal committee of the state's leading Republican officials, including Governor David Treen. He has not yet been nominated, but his record has been reviewed by the Justice Department search committee. The fact that the Administration has tentatively designated Toledano for the position is some indication that he is ideologically acceptable.

Toledano was the Republican Party candidate for New Orleans mayor in 1970 and for U.S. senator two years later. But in the late 1950s he was an official of the States' Rights Party of Louisiana—one of the "massive resistance" organizations active in the South following the Supreme Court's school desegregation decisions.

As acting chairman of the Orleans Parish committee of the States' Rights Party in December 1958, Toledano is reported in the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* to have stated: "We of the States' Rights Party of Louisiana believe that it is to the mutual advantage and benefit of both white and Negro people for there to be separation of the races in all matters which are essentially social in nature." Soon after, Toledano became executive secretary of the States' Rights Party—a paid position that he held until May 1959.

Toledano explained in a recent telephone interview that upon resigning as executive secretary he told the party chairman, Robert Chandler, that the party was a "lost cause" because it would be perceived as a "one-issue racist undertaking." Yet remarks made by Toledano more than a year after he quit cast doubts on the significance of this protest. In August 1960 he told a meeting of New Orleans area parents opposed to school desegregation, "The issue is not whether Negroes are inferior. I don't know about that. The issue is that white people should have the right to say their children should attend white schools."

Comments made by Toledano during his campaign against Moon Landrieu for New Orleans mayor a decade later further call into question his racial views. Toledano responded to a *Times-Picayune* reporter's question about the large number of black votes Landrieu got in the Democratic primary by stating that people "are frightened by the 92 percent Negro bloc vote Landrieu received." He later disparaged the City Human Relations Committee by complaining that it was "stacked with people who are concerned with the Negro to the exclusion of the rest of the community" and commenting that the committee "has concerned

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itself with the problem of blacks to the exclusion of the white community."

Another product of the Reagan system is Tennessee Federal District Judge Harry Wellford, appointed to a vacancy on the very Sixth Circuit Court that had faulted him time and again over the past eleven years for his failure to grant adequate relief to civil rights plaintiffs. Wellford, who makes "no claim to being a great legal mind," was so often overruled by the appellate court on which he now sits that he once said, "I know they're going to reverse me, but let them."

This is the same Wellford whose nomination to the Sixth Circuit in 1976 died in the Judiciary Committee in the face of a threatened Senate filibuster following an airing of his abysmal record at his confirmation hearings. That, however, did not deter Senator Howard Baker from proposing Wellford—a former campaign manager of Baker's—for another Sixth Circuit vacancy now that a Republican Administration sympathetic to Wellford's views occupies the White House.

Elsewhere in the South, Reagan has appointed a Jackson, Mississippi, lawyer, E. Grady Jolly, to another Fifth Circuit vacancy. Jolly has been critical of the "certification of overly broad classes" in lawsuits, and would thus limit—"by tight judicial control"—one kind of litigation that has proved essential in remedying systemic discrimination. Also, in his appointment of South Carolina District Court Judge Robert Chapman to the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, Reagan has elevated a judge (recommended by Senator Strom Thurmond) who has a record of finding civil rights violations only when the evidence is egregious.

Outside the South, the pull of patronage has been less pronounced, but the process remains mostly closed to those who do not share the Administration's philosophy. For a Connecticut seat on the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, the Administration has sought out Yale law professor Ralph Winter Jr., a leading critic of expansive interpretation of the Fourteenth Amendment's equal protection clause. And for a Seventh Circuit vacancy it appointed University of Chicago law professor Richard Posner, who is akin to Milton Friedman in the world of law.

Posner's judicial views bode particularly ill for civil libertarians. By his calculations, a correct "economic reading" of the Fourth Amendment would show that the rule prohibiting the use of improperly seized evidence in court "overdeters" police and prosecutors, since it "imposes social costs that are greatly disproportionate to the actual harm to lawful interests from unreasonable searches and seizures." And according to Posner, the need for "judicial protection" of privacy is small because individuals often "conceal" personal information for the purpose of deceiving other people.

A weakening of judicial protections can be expected as well from Robert Bork and Antonin Scalia, Reagan's appointments to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia.

Bork, for his part, wrote in the *Indiana Law Journal* in 1971 that there "is no basis for judicial intervention to protect any form of expression, be it scientific, literary or that variety of expression we call obscene or pornographic." All that warrants judicial protection, he said, is a narrow category of "political speech" that does not extend to rhetoric that "advocates forcible overthrow of the government or the violation of any law." There are also fundamental flaws with Bork's contention that the real question about the bombing of Cambodia was not whether Nixon had the "inherent power" to order it but rather whether Congress had the constitutional authority to stop him.

Scalia, too, is an unabashed advocate of inherent Presidential authority. As the Ford Administration's Assistant Attorney General for the Office of Legal Counsel, he testified that there is "a broad sense range of discretion with respect to executive privilege." In the years following, as a University of Chicago law professor, Scalia became a leading critic of the very Circuit Court on which he now sits—chastising the court, for example, for its "imposition of additional procedural requirements" on unresponsive regulatory agencies.

As a final example of ideological override, take the case of Wisconsin Judge John Coffey, whom Reagan appointed to the Seventh Circuit bench. Coffey is a law-and-order jurist whose philosophy is consistent with Reagan's. But he is also notorious for his intemperate courtroom behavior. During a five-year span, attorneys who had cases assigned to Coffey made more than a thousand requests for a change of judge.

The failings of the Reagan process also account for the fact that of the nineteen Circuit Court nominations he has made, the only member of a minority appointed was New York Federal District Judge Lawrence Pierce, for a Second Circuit vacancy. The sole woman to emerge as a prospective nominee for a Circuit Court vacancy was Missouri attorney Judith Whittaker—yet she was dropped from consideration following protests about her credentials from conservatives in that state.

Clearly, the revocation of the Carter reforms for recruiting Circuit Court candidates has more than symbolic significance. To be sure, there is a sense in which Presidents have the right to name to the courts anyone they want, regardless of questionable political careers or narrow-minded judicial attitudes. There is something disturbing, however, and dangerous, in a President who emphasizes right-wing ideology to the exclusion of more traditional juridical qualities and selects candidates for such high judicial office with dubious, if not disqualifying, credentials.

JAMES A. GOODMAN

James A. Goodman is a freelance writer specializing in legal affairs.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Because of the holidays, we will skip one issue of *The Nation* and resume publication with the issue of January 15. We wish our readers good health and good fortune in the coming year.

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DISPATCHES.

■ FRANCE: Naming Names

The vocation of naming the names of agents has not died out despite the passage last June of the Intelligence Identities Protection Act in the United States. A French bimonthly, *Bulletin d'Information sur l'Intervention Clandestine*, now has a regular feature called "Dropping Names," which carries biographies of C.I.A. personnel according to their country of activity.

The bulletin is published by the Association for the Right to Information, an organization founded in 1901 which lists Nobel Peace laureate Sean MacBride as honorary president. It says its purpose is to provide the public with information about clandestine interventions and to "aid the progressive movements everywhere in the world to defend themselves against these interventions."

In the September-October 1982 issue, the bulletin names C.I.A. station chiefs and lesser agents in Australia, Bangladesh, the Central African Republic, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman and Uruguay. While news about "the Company" gets the most print, the activities of the intelligence agencies of France (D.G.S.E. and SAC), Italy (P 2), Britain (M.I.5 and M.I.6), the Soviet Union (K.G.B.), Israel (Mossad) and Canada (R.C.M.P.) are covered as well.

Each issue is crammed with news about all kinds of intelligence matters. One small sample: Geoffrey Price, director of "close security" in the Central Intelligence Organization of Zimbabwe, has fled to Pretoria. It seems that he and three colleagues were working for South Africa's Bureau of State Security all along.

■ JAPAN: Countries 'In Arrears'

No one likes to talk too much about it, because the word "default" raises the specter of financial disaster. But if countries are "late in payment," how soon do they get to be considered in default?

A leading Japanese daily, *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*, recently published a "Who's Who in Arrears" compiled by the Japanese finance ministry. "They're the numbers which shouldn't be out," complained a senior official in the ministry's research and planning division. No kidding.

The figures show that twenty-two countries are "late" in payments totaling $11 billion. Seventeen of these owe money to Japanese commercial banks and other financial institutions such as insurance companies, the remaining five to the Export-Import Bank of Japan. Among the countries are Mexico ($5.89 billion), Argentina ($2.08 billion), Liberia ($1.52 billion) and Poland ($553 million).

The leaked figures also show that much of the debt is highly concentrated. Four major Japanese banks each have more than $1 billion at stake in Mexico, and for the Bank of Tokyo and Yasuda Trust and Banking that constitutes more than 77 percent of their equity. Banking regulations prohibit Japanese banks from lending more than 20 percent of their capital and reserves to any one country in long-term loans. The banks circumvented that by making short-term loans.

Given this overexposure, and the debt crisis in Mexico, one might think that the yen-lenders would be in a somewhat chastened mood these days. Yet since 1980, when the Bank of Tokyo moved from eighteenth place to first in "lead managing" internationally syndicated loans, Japanese lenders have tried to take a larger share of international financing—and have succeeded. They show few signs of caution now.

■ GERMANY: Restlessness, East and West

The two Germanys seem to be restless about the foreign policies of their respective superpower allies.

In West Germany, the negative reaction to U.S. policy toward Central America has been intense. One left-wing Berlin newspaper, *Die Tageszeitung*, has created a stir with a highly publicized fund-raising campaign called "Weapons for El Salvador." As of December the paper had collected more than 3 million Deutsche marks for the purchase of weapons for Salvadoran guerrillas. Apparently there is serious disagreement within the newspaper itself about the campaign, since many of the staff members support the peace movement slogan "Make Peace Without Weapons."

When Helmut Schmidt was chancellor his government received considerable criticism from members of the opposition Christian Democrats for not taking legal action against the newspaper and its drive. But now that they are in power, they have yet to move against the paper themselves.

In the other Germany, the one that still calls itself socialist, a bicycle rider was arrested for demonstrating on behalf of workers' rights. Roland Jahn, who rode through the town of Jena waving a Polish flag inscribed with the words "Solidarity with the Polish people," is now in pretrial detention.

Amnesty International reports that Jahn has gone on a hunger strike to protest being denied both visitors and access to a lawyer. Meanwhile, two of Jahn's friends have been imprisoned as well—one for refusing a summons to do reserve service in the army.

■ SYRIA: Echo Silenced

Sadaa al-Maraka started publication in Damascus during the second week of Israel's invasion of Lebanon. After the P.L.O.'s forced evacuation from Beirut, it was the Palestinian community's only daily newspaper—and one of the most keenly read papers in Syria.

Unlike the Syrian press, which is strictly controlled, *Sadaa al-Maraka* (The Battle's Echo) published firsthand news reports and its editor, Ahmad Dahbour, maintained an independent editorial line. The paper at times criticized the Syrian government's treatment of Palestinian refugees. It published translations from the foreign press, including Israeli newspapers. And while it was started with Fatah money, Dahbour made sure that the views of all Palestinian factions were represented in the paper. Circulation rose from an initial 3,000 to 15,000 within a matter of weeks.

But then, reports *Middle East International*, an order

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KAI BIRD AND MAX HOLLAND

came to shut the paper down as of November 19, 1982. At first most people pointed the finger at the Syrians. It turns out, however, that Yasir Arafat ordered the paper closed.

His stated reason was that the paper was published as a temporary measure only and that newsstands must be cleared for *Falastin al-Thawra*, Fatah's official magazine. The real reason runs deeper, however. It seems that while *Falastin al-Thawra* (The Revolution of Palestine) was editorially applauding the Arab unity meeting at Fez, Morocco, *Sadaa al-Maraka* severely criticized the conciliatory points in the joint Arab resolution. The paper rejected the notion of an implied recognition of Israel and specifically condemned Arafat for his overtures to King Hussein.

That Arafat has chosen to silence press criticism is one of the strongest signs yet that Fatah apparatchiks are seeking some kind of political compromise with their erstwhile Arab enemies and Israel—though it's hardly reassuring to those who believe in the virtues of an unshackled press.

■ PHILIPPINES: Heart of Darkness

When Francis Ford Coppola adapted Joseph Conrad's novel of a "lost command" for his film *Apocalypse Now*, he shot it in the Philippines. Now it appears that life has imitated art. Filipinos have their own version of Conrad's Kurtz.

The renegade leader is Col. Carlos (Charlie) Lademora, commander of an irregular force of some 275 ex-soldiers and opportunity seekers in Agusan del Sur, a province on the southern island of Mindanao. Lademora first gained notoriety (and his rank) while using unorthodox methods to fight Moslem separatists during the mid-1970s. In 1979, with the insurgency largely dormant, Lademora decided to make Agusan del Sur his home base. "Charlie's Angels," as they are known, have terrorized the province ever since.

Lademora provides for his forces by controlling the province's logging concessions and gold-panning. Of late he has also moved into the protection racket. The Scottish manager of a new 60,000-acre oil-palm plantation recently hired twelve men from Lademora's lost command. When asked why, he told a reporter for the *Far Eastern Economic Review*: "They exist."

Lademora plans to resign his commission soon, but neither he nor his forces are likely to retire from the province. Indeed, in the past year Lademora seems to have acquired the unofficial sanction of some high-level government officials. The Philippines is in the throes of a severe economic slump which could force the government to scale back the payments it has been making to former Moslem rebels to keep the truce; Lademora might be useful in keeping them in line. Perhaps more important, since 1981 the Marxist-inspired New People's Army in eastern Mindanao has grown by as much as 50 percent and now numbers between 1,000 and 2,000 regulars. Lademora is known to be valued for his antiguerrilla record by Manila authorities.

Mindanao, in fact, is testimony to the rapid increase in the size of the N.P.A. The government estimates that there are now 6,000 to 8,000 guerrillas operating in forty-one of the seventy-two Philippine provinces. (The N.P.A. began organizing in 1969 with fewer than 50 members, mostly university students.) While most observers believe economic difficulties have played a key part in that growth, others point to the Marcos government's ineptitude and repression. As a leaked State Department cable noted recently, "Government programs are unevenly distributed, often poorly planned or poorly managed, and—except for some superficial attention to the Muslim segment of the population—it is generally agreed that the greater the distance from Manila, the less the government interest in a region."

■ JERUSALEM: Armenian Intrigue

Citing "security reasons," the Israeli government has asked an Armenian Archbishop to leave the country "at the earliest date." Archbishop Karekian Kazanjian, an Australian citizen, was elected in 1981 to the office of Grand Sacristan, whose responsibility it is to protect Armenian holy sites in Jerusalem. Kazanjian was recently quoted in *The Jerusalem Post* as saying he would not leave. "They can kill me if they want," he said.

In retaliation for the Israeli decision, the patriarchs of the three leading Christian churches in Jerusalem (Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian) say they will close down the Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem if Kazanjian is refused permission to stay. The patriarchs wrote Prime Minister Begin: "We are inclined to consider such a refusal an interference in our church affairs . . . and a restriction of our Ecclesiastical jurisdiction which we have enjoyed for centuries."

The details of the "security" threat posed by the Archbishop's presence in Jerusalem have not been specified, but Yosef Burg, minister of religious affairs, claimed he would not have made the decision "without good reason." Several years ago a Greek Orthodox Archbishop, Hilarion Capucci, was imprisoned and then expelled by the Israelis for allegedly transporting weapons into the West Bank. But no such charges have been leveled at Kazanjian.

Sources in Jerusalem's Armenian community say that the truth in this case is a bit more, well, byzantine. Kazanjian's rival, Archbishop Shahe Ajamian, was ousted as chancellor (treasurer) by his church colleagues last April. Ajamian was rumored to have made unauthorized sales of church lands in the West Bank and Jerusalem to Israelis. Kazanjian has earned the displeasure of Israeli authorities precisely because he has refused to sell church property.

Armenian clergymen have been subjected to the intrigues of Jerusalem's rulers before. In 1959, when East Jerusalem was in King Hussein's hands, an American, Bishop Tiran Nersoyan, was seized by Jordanian police while performing mass and rushed aboard a departing plane. Contemporary State Department cables released under the Freedom of Information Act show that somebody had fingered Nersoyan as associating with "communists." In fact, we have learned, a church colleague angling for his job had vigorously lobbied Jordanian officials to expel his American rival.

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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

I am often mistaken for the sort of person who does not own a tuxedo. Once or twice, I regret to say, this mistake has been made even though I happened to be wearing a tuxedo at the time ("My goodness, are they still renting that kind?"). More often, it is part of a general impression. "I don't suppose you own a tuxedo . . ." people sometimes say to me, the way an English country gentleman might say to the Hasidic scholar he has met on the train, "I don't suppose you own a shooting stick. . . ." The general impression is incorrect. I do own a tuxedo. I have owned a tuxedo for nearly thirty years. The same tuxedo. If you were planning to invite me to an event at which tuxedos are required, rest assured that I would show up properly dressed.

Don't ask me for New Year's Eve. I'm busy. I go to the same party every New Year's Eve, and one reason it gives me great pleasure is that it presents me with an opportunity to wear my tuxedo. I bought the tuxedo in 1954, when I was a thrifty young undergraduate, because I had added up the number of black-tie events I would have to attend during college, divided the cost of a tuxedo by that number and concluded that I would be better off buying a tuxedo than renting one. As you must have gathered, this was a fancy college. I am often mistaken for the sort of person who did not attend a fancy college, but that's another story.

As it turned out, there have been a number of occasions to wear the tuxedo since graduation—that possibility hadn't even figured in my tuxedo management scheme in 1954—and every time I wear it the cost per wearing decreases. This New Year's Eve, for instance, wearing my tuxedo is going to cost me only about 48 cents. Try renting a tuxedo for 48 cents these days. Knowing that my tuxedo becomes cheaper every time I wear it may influence me in the direction of showing up in a tuxedo now and then at events where black-tie is not strictly necessary, like a hog roast or a divorce hearing or a meeting where people are planning the overthrow of the government by force and violence.

"Oh, you shouldn't have bothered," the hostess often says, while gazing admiringly at my cummerbund.

"It's nothing, really," I tell her. "A matter of approximately 55 cents."

When I tell people about my tuxedo ("Guess how much this tuxedo is costing me tonight. Go ahead—don't be afraid to guess. Just take a guess. How much do you think?"), they often tell me that I should be proud of being able to fit into something I bought in college. True. I would be prouder, though, if I did not have reason to believe that the pants of my tuxedo actually belong to Joe LeBeau. Joe was a college classmate of mine—a rather rotund college classmate of mine, if you must know. I have reason to believe that just before graduation, at a black-tie party for which a large room was converted into a dormitory for a number of out-of-town guests who were wearing nearly identical tuxedos, Joe LeBeau and I came away with each other's pants. That's the sort of thing that can happen at a fancy college.

When somebody who sees me in my tuxedo asks a question that leads to the subject of Joe LeBeau ("Say, are you by any chance wearing somebody else's pants, or what?"), I am often asked why I did not simply exchange his pants for my own once the mistake was discovered. Anybody who asks that never knew Joe LeBeau, for whom the phrase "not vulnerable to reason" was invented. As an example of LeBeauesque conversation, I repeat an exchange between LeBeau and an earnest fellow from down the hall who happened to be taking the same course in modern history:

Joe LeBeau: The French and Germans were fighting on the same side then.

Earnest Fellow: But that's impossible! The French hated the Germans!

Joe LeBeau: Do you blame them?

I haven't seen Joe LeBeau since graduation—I understand he's a judge in California—but I occasionally run into other classmates who, as graduates of a fancy college, tend to be Wall Street financiers, impatient with those of us who have not just depreciated a factory or written off an airline. "What are you up to?" they always say.

"I am amortizing my tuxedo," I tell them. "I am amortizing the hell out of my tuxedo."

By exchanging such pleasantries with the rich, I realize, I continue to disappoint the fellow around the office we call Harold the Committed, who as New Year's Eve approaches still has not reconciled himself to the failure of my 10-year-old daughter to take his suggestion that she go to our neighborhood Halloween parade as Emma Goldman. Harold the Committed continues to worry a lot about the possibility that I am not worrying enough.

"What are you doing about the finite supply of natural resources on this planet?" he said only the other day.

"I'm glad you asked, Hal the C," I replied. "As it happens, I have been wearing the same tuxedo now for nearly thirty years. No squandering of the earth's irreplaceable fossil fuels to produce a new tuxedo every season for me. Nobody's clear-cutting any forests to make me a tuxedo. Little children in Europe aren't starving while I leave perfectly good tuxedos on my plate."

Harold the Committed, after reminding me that the Scottsboro Boys didn't own even one tuxedo among them, said that I was badly in need of attending one of his regular recommitment meetings.

"Any time but New Year's Eve," I said. "I'm busy on New Year's Eve."

I can see my New Year's Eve now. I am dressing for the evening. I calculate what my tuxedo is going to cost me to wear to the same party one year hence, assuming I wear it occasionally during the intervening months—to a turkey shoot, say, or a bris. Even taking the voluminous pants off the hanger gives me pleasure. I find it a bit awkward putting on Joe LeBeau's pants, of course, but I love to start the new year by thinking of him trying to put on mine.

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ARTICLES.

BEHIND THE HONDURAN BUILDUP

Reagan's 'Secret' War on Nicaragua

STEPHEN SCHLESINGER

Despite the President's denials—and despite even the new Congressional order against just such an effort—the Reagan Administration is launched on a course to undermine and ultimately overthrow the Sandinist regime in Nicaragua. This "worst-kept secret war," as *The New York Times* calls it, has been front-page news for months, and it is now well established that the Central Intelligence Agency is using former Somoza National Guardsmen to initiate a covert war against Nicaragua from neighboring Honduras, a longtime and pliable ally of the United States. But no press accounts have fully gauged the breadth of the American conspiracy against Nicaragua.

Since Reagan took office, the United States has relied on intimidation and destabilization to disrupt, isolate and replace the Sandinist regime. The Administration has presumed that in dealing with Nicaragua, intimidation and destabilization are as legitimate as diplomacy, though such tactics are forbidden by the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance and by the charters of the Organization of American States and the United Nations. So far, however, to the chagrin of Reagan strategists, the two methods have not worked, and that increases the chances of an outright war between Nicaragua and the United States.

The American tactics of intimidation started after the Administration realized it could not coerce the Sandinists by diplomacy to reduce their troop strength, refrain from buying MIGs from the Soviet Union, end arms deliveries to Salvadoran guerrillas and dissolve their governing directorate. On April 1, 1981, the United States cut off all economic aid to Nicaragua and then increased its pressure on international lending institutions to deny the Sandinists loans and advised American companies to get out of Nicaragua. Periodically thereafter, Secretary of State Haig, in Congressional testimony and political speeches, emphasized the dangers posed by the Nicaraguan revolution and hinted at countermeasures Washington might take.

At a November 1981 House hearing, for example, Haig assailed the "totalitarian character of the Sandinista regime" and said he would not rule out any options, including a military blockade, to end Nicaragua's "subversion" of El Salvador. Haig's remarks took on an even more ominous coloration with the revelations in *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* in February and March 1982 that the White House had approved a ten-point C.I.A. covert operation against Nicaragua.

Then on March 9, 1982, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Adm. Bobby Inman released thirty-six aerial photographs of Nicaraguan military bases taken by U.S. spy planes. The pictures, Inman claimed, documented a large-scale military buildup in Nicaragua, including the construction of thirty-six new installations, the presence of Russian helicopters and tanks and the lengthening of landing strips at three airports to accommodate jets. (Incidentally, the Nicaraguan "air force" consists of three propeller-driven Cessna 180s, two T-33s and three T-28s. The country has no navy. Its only protection is its army, consisting of 25,000 poorly trained soldiers, 25,000 reservists, 70,000 militia volunteers, twenty-five Soviet tanks that don't operate well in jungles and assorted defensive missiles.)

The White House put steel into its threats with growing military support for Honduras, a public foe of the Sandinist regime. To signal Nicaragua that it possessed the means eventually to make good on them, the Administration has turned Honduras into its most powerful base in Central America outside of its military depot in Panama.

The effort began shortly after Reagan's inauguration. The United States increased its embassy staff in the capital, Tegucigalpa, to about 115, making it one of the largest in Latin America. Reagan's new Ambassador, John D. Negroponte, according to *Newsweek* (November 8, 1982), was charged specifically with directing the campaign against Nicaragua. Washington also sent 100 Pentagon "advisers,"

DRAWINGS BY FRANCES JETTER

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about double the number in El Salvador, and an unknown number of Green Berets.

The Administration increased its military assistance to Honduras, which had begun to edge up under President Carter, by more than seven times, from about $4 million in 1980 to $30 million in 1982; Reagan officials are today pressing for the same amount for 1983. (Some diplomats say these figures understate the real totals by two or three times.) Honduras is now the biggest recipient of U.S. military aid in the Americas, after El Salvador. In addition, President Reagan recently sought another $21 million in nonmilitary aid to "modernize" three Honduran airfields to handle U.S. jet fighters and large transports.

American assistance helps maintain Honduras's army of almost 20,000 soldiers, about equal to that of El Salvador and Guatemala, though both countries have larger populations. Pentagon technicians are fortifying positions around the country, particularly near the Nicaraguan border—for example, transforming the village of Durzuna, just twenty-five miles from the border, into a modern base for an infantry and artillery battalion, an engineering unit and aircraft. American military advisers have also begun to teach Honduran recruits how to patrol the country's borders and protect the Somocista groups encamped there.

Washington has contributed to making the Honduran Air Force the most powerful in Central America. As part of its grand design, it has "loaned" Honduras most of a helicopter fleet of twenty-three and may supply ten more; it has helped assemble a thirty-five-member jet fighter squad (including twenty Super Mysteres, ten F-86 Sabres and five A-37B Dragonfly ground-attack bombers) as well as a force of twenty-four Trojan trainer-bombers and three reconnaissance aircraft; it may soon make available twelve Northrop F-5E/F attack planes and heavy transport craft. In addition, as the United States beefs up its own aerial presence in the country, it is likely that many of its fighters and whirlybirds will end up in Honduran hangars.

Since 1981, the United States has held two joint military exercises with Honduras. The first, to practice ship interceptions, occurred from October 7 to 9, 1981, off the Honduran port of Puerto Cortez on the Atlantic coast. The second took place this past summer at the new base at Durzuna. In that operation, two U.S. C-130 transport carriers flew to Puerto Lempira from Panama to deliver automatic rifle cartridges, machine gun shells, mortars, patrol rations, jeeps, four helicopters and other supplies. Many of these provisions are still in Honduras. A third joint maneuver close to the Nicaraguan border was planned for last month but was postponed because of President Reagan's visit to Honduras at the same time.

To show its further resolve against the Sandinists (and against other revolutionaries in the area), the Administration has twice ordered independent naval exercises in the Caribbean. The first, in November 1981, involved 38 ships and 200 aircraft. The second, operation "Ocean Venture, 1982" took place from April 27 to May 17 [see Michael T. Klare, "Testing Out Haig's New War Policy," *The Nation*, June 19, 1982]. Some 45,000 American troops, at least 60 warships, 360 combat planes and 132 transports took part. The Pentagon has also upgraded its naval command post at Key West, Florida, at the cost of $20 million.

In the last eight months, the White House has placed its considerable naval fleet at readiness in the Caribbean and has stationed a spy ship in the Gulf of Fonseca off Nicaragua's western shore. Marines are on call for rapid deployment from Puerto Rico, Panama and the U.S. mainland. SR-71 Lockheed reconnaissance planes regularly fly over Nicaragua at 80,000 feet to take photographs of military bases there.

In addition to military assistance for Honduras, Washington has also been providing an immense amount of covert aid. In their revelations last winter, *The Post* and *The Times* noted that the C.I.A. received permission from President Reagan in mid-November 1981 to spend $19 million to fund anti-Sandinist rebels in Honduras. The C.I.A. immediately doubled the number of its agents in Honduras, according to *Newsweek*, and is now supplying tacticians, small weapons, food, clothing and housing.

The agency may also be helping to finance refugee centers like the camp at Mocoron (conveniently located a short distance from Durzuna), many of whose 10,000 inhabitants are Miskito Indians who fled Nicaragua when Sandinist troops fortifying the frontier tried to resettle them. If past C.I.A. practices are any guide, the agency probably also pays the bills for Radio 15th of September, the exile radio station which beams propaganda from Honduras to Nicaragua, and for similar stations in Costa Rica. The broadcasting facilities are designed, among other things, to spread rumors and sow panic among Nicaraguans, especially about a possible Cuban takeover. The C.I.A. has clearly not been limited by the $19 million Reagan approved: it has by now probably set up its own businesses, trade organizations and paper political parties in Honduras.

Washington's "secret war" also includes various operations, overt and otherwise, aimed directly at Nicaragua.

Last June 23, President Reagan asked Congress to authorize $5.1 million in new grants to provide "political and moral" support for Nicaragua's Catholic Church, as well as for nongovernmental opponents of the Sandinists, following a devastating flood. Even before the moneys were approved, however, the Sandinists spurned the gift as a "direct interference in our internal affairs." The C.I.A. may be making up for the grant losses: traditionally in such cases it has agents in the "enemy" country pass money clandestinely to dissidents, democratic or not. The agency has also been known to set up front organizations, including businesses, guilds, cultural associations, sailing camps, flying clubs and so on, as covers for its operatives to use to encourage defections or provoke internal disorder.

The United States has also organized its regional allies into a semimilitary association called the Central American Democratic Community. The alliance, founded in January last year, includes Honduras, Costa Rica and El Salvador (with Guatemala as an observer) and is ostensibly designed

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to "utilize the Inter-American system as a defense against aggression." But on July 7, C.A.D.C. foreign ministers released a statement that gave its real raison d'être. Expressing fear over the "disproportionate" number of weapons caches and troops in Nicaragua, they demanded that Nicaragua "stop its arms race which is becoming a threat to peace in the region."

Washington followed this meeting with a "Forum For Peace" in Costa Rica on October 4. Eight nations—the United States, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Belize, El Salvador, Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Colombia—called for an accord to outlaw weapons shipments, subversion and the use of foreign military advisers in the region, warnings clearly aimed at Managua. Indeed, a Nicaraguan spokesman called the pronouncement a "declaration of war" against the Sandinists.

The United States is of course financing insurgents and mercenaries both here and in Honduras in what *The Times* has called "the most ambitious paramilitary and political action operation mounted by the Central Intelligence Agency in nearly a decade." Thousands of anti-Sandinists, most of them ex-Somoza National Guardsmen, are training in California and Florida camps for action against the regime. ABC *Evening News* revealed on November 18, 1982, that the C.I.A. was currently employing several thousand Americans, all "former" Green Berets, to instruct right-wing Nicaraguan exiles in Honduras. Reportedly these Nicaraguan recruits undergo five-week C.I.A. training courses, and biweekly flights from the Canal Zone bring in grenade launchers, machine guns, rifles and mortars to arm them.

The Honduran-based raiders, who now number about 4,500, have grown very proficient at sneak attacks in recent months. Composed of ex-Guardsmen, as well as Miskito Indian refugees and other Nicaraguan exiles under the banner of the Nicaraguan Democratic Front, the bands have struck repeatedly from small border towns and increasingly from camps inside Nicaragua. The "maximum" leader is Enrique Bermudez, a one-time colonel in Somoza's National Guard. His teams operate in units of up to forty men, led by the Somocista Guardsmen, and their retreats over the border after fights with Nicaraguan soldiers are frequently covered by Honduran Army regulars. The raids are usually directed at industrial, agricultural and transportation targets in an attempt to weaken the economy, but the raiders hope eventually to seize the whole Eastern Province and set up a provisional government. Sandinist leaders claim that more than 200 Nicaraguan soldiers and civilians have been killed in these ambushes over the past eighteen months.

To unify the anti-Sandinist groups, Reagan officials are apparently searching for an acceptable exile commander. Last winter they promoted a charismatic Miskito named Steadman Fagoth Mueller as a possible leader, but he was discredited when the Sandinists produced documents proving he had once served as an agent of Somoza.

According to *New York* (September 13, 1982), Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders met secretly last August with Edén Pastora Gómez, the most influential and liberal anti-Sandinist in exile. He was the heroic Sandinist "Commandante Zero," who in 1978 captured Nicaragua's Legislative Palace and negotiated the release of a group of leading Sandinist political prisoners. He now favors a "third way" between the Sandinist left and the Somoza right, a way which includes nonalignment and a Western-style democracy. Enders reportedly offered American "support and money" and informed Pastora that, with the backing of the Socialist International movement, he hoped Pastora would "kill Communism with Socialism" in Nicaragua.

But Pastora objected to Enders's insistence that financial aid depended on his aligning himself with Somocistas in Honduras. He argued that any association with the detested Guardsmen would immediately discredit him in Nicaragua. Instead, he said, he wants to form an independent, liberal democratic opposition in Honduras. Enders was not responsive. Pastora remains today in Costa Rica.

All the signs out of Honduras in recent months suggest that the United States has decided to give full support to the Somocista raiders there, probably under Enrique Bermudez's command. This coming month will determine just how extensive that support will be. The rainy season has just ended and the skies are clear, permitting easy overland travel and pinpoint air attacks. A "winter offensive" is not unlikely. □

WHAT THE VOTING REALLY MEANT

The Messages of The 1982 Election

CURTIS B. GANS

Four years ago, at a conference sponsored by the American Bar Association on the problem of low and declining voter participation, columnist David Broder said that perhaps the best prescription would be a good dose of conservative government. In light of the results of the 1982 election, it would appear, at least on the surface, that he was right.

For the first time in two decades, voter turnout in a midterm election increased. For the first time in history, blacks voted in numbers approximating their proportion of the population. For the first time since Lyndon Johnson ripped them asunder by his unbridled prosecution of the war in Vietnam, the traditional elements of the Democratic coalition—minorities, labor, urban interests and liberals—rallied together. For the first time in recent memory, there seemed to be a choice on *issues* relevant to the majority of Americans, if not between *policies* to resolve those issues.

However, if one looks below the surface, the trends are

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sufficiently disturbing to make the initial euphoria over the election turnout and results short-lived.

These are the very clear positive aspects of this election:

☐ It reversed, at least temporarily, a twenty-year trend of declining voter participation. The little more than 3 percent increase ended the 10 percent decline since 1962 in the percentage of eligible voters casting ballots in off-year elections.

☐ It routed the irrational right. Of the fourteen senatorial candidates targeted by the National Conservative Political Action Committee (NCPAC) only one, Howard Cannon of Nevada, lost, and that was for reasons having nothing to do with ideology. Throughout the South, right-wing Republicans lost House seats to moderate Democrats—a shift of ten seats in the region. Two leading right-wing spokesmen—John Rousselot of California and John LeBoutillier of New York—both lost, as did the one remaining turncoat Democrat, Eugene Atkinson of Pennsylvania.

☐ In general, it was a moderating or liberalizing election. The Democrats gained twenty-six seats in the House, substantially better than average in the first off-year election when the President is of the opposition party. They also gained a net seven governorships.

Perhaps more important, in all but a handful of races in which seats changed hands, a more liberal person replaced a more conservative one—including races in New York, Massachusetts and Alabama, where a more liberal (or, in the case of George Wallace, a more chastened) Democrat took the place of a more conservative one. In every region save the West, Republicans who tightly embraced Reagan's policies had a tougher time winning re-election than those who declared their independence.

Nuclear freeze referendums won in all but one of the nine states and all but two of the forty towns and cities where they were on the ballot.

The negatives emerging from the election are more subtle:

☐ By a ratio of at least three to two, there were more new nonvoters (18- and 19-year-olds registered but not going to the polls) than new voters. The young did not turn out as predicted for the nuclear freeze referendums; women did not turn out as predicted in greater numbers and to a more liberalizing effect than men. Rather, this election witnessed a return to the polls of some working-class and minority Democrats who had sat out recent elections, most notably those of 1978 and 1980.

☐ Although the turnout went up in most of the nation, it went down in the West. The largest increase occurred in the South—due in part to a surge in black voters angered by the malign neglect of the Reagan Administration. But voting in the South also increased as a result of the stimulus of a continuing trend to two-party competition and thus the replacement of the Democratic primary by the general election as the focal point of voter interest.

Turnout also increased in all the industrial states except Pennsylvania. But in most of these states, the increase was below the national average, below the numbers that might have been expected in an election conducted in the midst of the highest unemployment since the Depression.

☐ The nature of the Democratic victory was somewhat less significant than the figures seemed to indicate. Of the twenty-six House seats won by Democrats, two-thirds were in districts in which the unemployment rate exceeded the 10.4 percent national average. Moreover, twenty-two of the twenty-six victories were in the South or came as a direct result of the gerrymandering of Representative Philip Burton, whose redrawing of district lines in California produced ten sure Democratic seats.

☐ The liberalizing trend did not prevail in all contests. The liberal side lost on most referendums other than those on nuclear weapons and nuclear power, including gun control and bottle-deposit proposals. The two blacks trying to break new political ground—Robert Clark as the first black since Reconstruction to occupy a House seat from Mississippi, Tom Bradley as the first elected black governor anywhere—both lost. The most prominent women candidates—Harriet Woods of Missouri, Roxanne Conlin of Iowa and Millicent Fenwick of New Jersey—were all beaten.

Out of this welter of conflicting signals, what lessons can be learned for the immediate future?

First, this was an election of anger. The increases in turnout and the turnaround in seats in the House and statehouses were caused by fear among black and working-class voters about the impact of Reaganomics on their lives, livelihoods and aspirations.

Second, the principal victim was the far right. It is unlikely that that force will disappear as long as the fundamentalism upon which it is based remains a part of American life, but it is virtually certain that its issues—abortion, gun control, school prayer and busing—will not be at the center of the American agenda in the near future.

Third, the 1980 Reagan "mandate" was obviously personal rather than programmatic. The President did not suffer a repudiation on the scale of Johnson's in 1966 or Nixon's in 1974, but the electorate made it clear that there was no mandate for dismantling détente, emasculating environmental regulation or reducing government services. On the other hand, the Democrats, because they offered no program, received no mandate. By virtue of their twenty-six-seat gain in the House they were in effect given a veto over the excesses of the Reagan program, and the gain of seven governorships suggests they may be able to exact electoral retribution in 1984 should Reagan fail to trim his sails. But by failing to gain a single seat in the Senate, the Democrats (perhaps mercifully, in light of their present intellectual disarray) were given no directive for proposing new public policy. In the short run, then, all one can expect is a modest tempering of Reagan's economic and foreign policies.

For the long-range future, the message of this election is also clear: both major political parties are in trouble.

It is virtually inconceivable that the Republicans will re-

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tain their hold on national power without an upturn in the economy. If this election is any guide, it is unlikely that the Republicans can count on winning the South—as they have hoped to do in national elections since 1952—unless they make a concerted effort to address the needs of that region's minorities. And it is possible that, unless they make some concrete progress toward arms control and détente, the gender gap, which was not evident in this election because the issues of war and peace were not joined in most races, may rise up in 1984 to smite them. In a broader sense, it is unlikely that a party based, as the Republican Party now is, on the narrow interests of the largest of American corporations and the most strident of fundamentalist reactionaries can long retain power.

As for the Democrats, it seems clear that if the economy had not been in trouble, they would have emerged from this election empty-handed.

They approached the election with the belief that Reagan's policies would defeat themselves by fusing the traditional elements of the Democratic coalition against them. The Democrats' fourfold platform—that they were not Republicans, that they were not responsible for the economic mess, that they wouldn't tamper with Social Security and that they would protect jobs through protectionism—was designed to create a minimum of political waves.

They were justly rewarded for their negligible effort.

The Democrats' lack of program and their reliance on their traditional base proved to be inadequate. With one exception, they lost every race of consequence west of the farm belt, the region where the economic distress has been less severe. And despite the return of working-class and minority voters to the fold, the Democrats were not able to make significant gains in Congress in the industrial states.

If the economy should turn around even modestly between now and 1984 and thus reduce the impetus of working-class voters to get to the polls, and if the Democrats do not come up with a program for broadening their appeal beyond the industrial states and working-class interests, they could be in as much trouble as the Republicans appear to be in now.

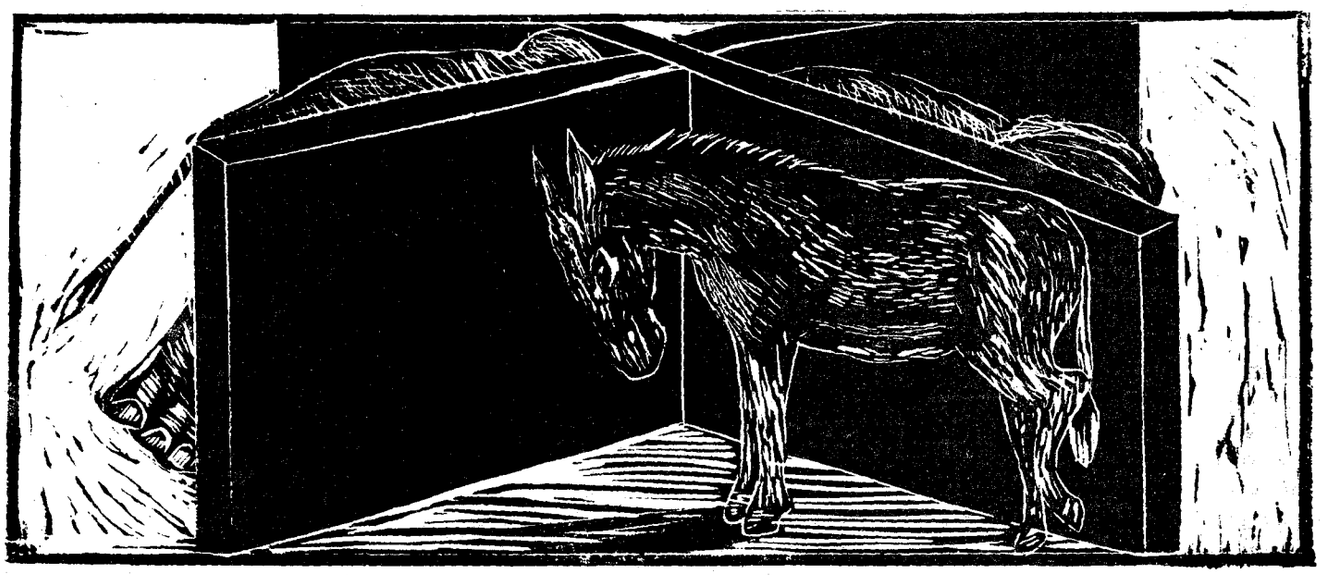
For the central verity of American political life is that the 1960s produced a new class of voters, the educated white-collar and professional middle-class, which makes up a third of the electorate. It is precisely this element which is coming to believe that neither party can adequately address America's problems.

When Broder prescribed a dose of conservative government four years ago, he did so in the hope and belief that there would be a liberal response, a constructive redefinition of liberal values in the context of today's realities. This has not happened.

It has not happened, in part, because there is a generational problem that besets liberalism in general and the Democratic Party in particular. One generation of Democrats is made up of traditional liberals and unionists who believe in a restoration of essentially New Deal economics and governance; the other generation believes that liberalism must redefine itself in a context of limited resources, power and the ability of the Federal government to address all problems.

And it has not happened because it is easier for the Democratic Party to do "business as usual," to attempt to be the accumulation of its various interest groups rather than attempting to find a thread of common interest that may alienate one or more elements.

Given these difficulties, the odds are that the Democrats will move to 1984 as they have moved in the past, hoping that the opposition will provide them with the ammunition for victory. That is possible: the electorate has become acclimated to throwing one bastard after another out of office, especially in hard times. But the only sustaining basis for continued increased turnout and the renewed vitality of the American political system is the hope that government and politics can produce programmatic answers to the political, social and economic problems of most Americans. Grounds for that hope were not in evidence in this election. □



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Radiation

(Continued From Front Cover)

William H. Taft 4th expressed the official position by attacking the idea "that exposure to low-level ionizing radiation is a significant health hazard, when available scientific and medical evidence simply does not support that contention."

But the evidence is overwhelming that thousands of Americans, exposed to what they were told were "safe" doses of low-level radiation, are now suffering from cancer and other radiation-related diseases. Their story, from Hiroshima to Three Mile Island and beyond, may well be the biggest health scandal in United States history.

The story begins at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1950 the U.S. Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission—funded by the Atomic Energy Commission—began studying the effects of those blasts so as to determine standards for "safe" radiation-exposure levels. There are a number of reasons to be suspicious of its findings. For one thing, the A.B.C.C. naturally took its direction from the ardently pronuclear A.E.C. and other government agencies with nuclear interests. And since much of its research was to be used to settle compensation suits brought by surviving Japanese victims, it had every reason to understate the extent of the radiation damage caused by the blasts. The studies are also flawed because statistics on the Hiroshima-Nagasaki population at the time of the bombings were sketchy. Moreover, since there were no radiation monitors in those cities, the doses the population received had to be estimated later by computer simulation, a process of dubious accuracy.

Nonetheless, as the first mass-scale research on the effects of radiation on humans, the A.B.C.C. studies have been given high credibility. They have been used to help set the "standard allowable" dose rates for workers in nuclear industries and for people living near atomic reactors. And they have been used regularly to fend off nuclear critics.

But in the spring of 1981, the A.B.C.C. work came under attack from authoritative sources. A news story in the May 22 issue of *Science* reported that researchers from both the Oak Ridge and Lawrence Livermore national laboratories have conceded that the A.B.C.C. estimates of the lethal power of neutron radiation may have been drastically understated, because the amount of radiation was significantly overestimated. "Government physicists have recalculated the data," the magazine said, and "all of these scientists agree that the accepted figures . . . are grossly overstated," some "by a factor of 6 to 10." David Auton, a physicist in the Defense Nuclear Agency, points out that the new findings indicate the killing power of neutrons is "incredible" and therefore all industrial safety rules about neutron radiation should be revised, reducing exposure limits to one tenth of the present limits. He also says there is a possibility that gamma rays produced by the Hiroshima bomb were far more toxic than had been thought.

Then in June 1982 the A.B.C.C. estimates were further undermined by Dr. Alice Stewart, a well-known cancer researcher at the University of Birmingham in Britain who discovered the harmful effects of medical X-rays on pregnant women. In the British *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* she presented figures showing that the number of cancer deaths attributed to the Hiroshima-Nagasaki bombs may have been understated by a factor of three, and overall radiation deaths may have been off by a factor of ten. Victor E. Archer, a top-ranking American radiation specialist for thirty years, characterizes Dr. Stewart's findings as "the second 'bomb' that has been dropped on the previously sacrosanct Japanese A-bomb survivor studies."

The combined force of these two revisions on the debate over what radiation can do to the human body is hard to overemphasize. To put it bluntly: those glib, well-funded government scientists who have spent so many years assaulting nuclear critics have been talking through their hats, operating on a set of estimates with very little basis in reality.

The political implications of the A.B.C.C. miscalculations extend far beyond a reconsideration of what happened at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

From 1946 to 1963, the United States conducted 212 atomic and hydrogen tests in the atmosphere. The explosions were staged at the Marshall Islands in the South Pacific and at the Nevada Test Site near Las Vegas.

In the course of the tests, several hundred thousand soldiers were exposed to radiation. In some cases they were ordered to march through "ground zero" shortly after the blasts, apparently to see how humans would react in battlefield conditions. In other instances they were ordered to scrub down irradiated ships or perform menial tasks out in the open at test sites. In all cases, they either were not told that radiation was involved or were assured that the doses they would receive were "too small" to cause harm. (Scientists and top officers at the bomb sites, however, did take precautions to protect themselves during the tests.)

Those assurances now seem tragic deceptions. Thousands of veterans have filed claims against the Veterans Administration for compensation for their destroyed health. Only a handful have been granted—just over twenty so far—and the vets have grown bitter. In 1979 Orville Kelly, a former sergeant who witnessed twenty-two South Pacific tests, founded the National Association of Atomic Veterans to try to secure justice for the exposed soldiers. Kelly has since died of cancer, but the organization is growing by leaps and bounds, now claiming some 1,500 members.

The initial health indicators are not encouraging. The government's Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta have studied the 3,224 soldiers exposed to "Shot Smoky" in 1957 and found a leukemia rate three times higher than normal.

Harvey Wasserman and Norman Solomon are co-authors with Robert Alvarez and Eleanor Walters of Killing Our Own: The Disaster of America's Experience With Atomic Radiation *(Delacorte Press and Delta Books). Alvarez and Walters provided research assistance for this article.*

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If the ratio holds for other bomb tests, many hundreds of atomic veterans have died or are now dying of leukemia, uninformed and uncompensated.

Nor have military personnel been the only ones affected. Fallout from the 106 tests in the South Pacific has affected a great number of Marshallese, whose suits against the government—currently being tried on the West Coast—come to more than $100 million. Thyroid disease is so prevalent among them that other Pacific islanders are said to recognize Marshallese by the throat scars from their operations.

In the United States, a class action suit has been filed on behalf of 1,192 "downwinders" in Nevada, Utah and Arizona. The suit—which went to trial last fall with Stuart Udall as lead attorney for the plaintiffs—contends that people in the path of clouds from about 100 above-ground blasts at the Nevada Test Site have been devastated by cancer, reproductive problems (including mutations and sterility) and other health nightmares virtually unknown in the area before the testing began. Ironically, those most heavily exposed were nondrinking, nonsmoking Mormons, living in an area where there were no industrial carcinogens and where the reproductive rate was twice the national average.

Despite a lack of reliable studies, the A.E.C. at the time of the tests told the public that there was no possible health danger. One official statement assured the downwind residents that "exposures from fallout are very much smaller than those which would be required to produce observable effects in the population."

But Frank Butrico, a U.S. Public Health Service officer stationed in the region at the time, has now confirmed that the government knew some exposures were dangerous and knowingly took "liberties" with its radiation-monitoring program. In at least one 1953 test, fallout levels were far higher than the government wanted to admit. Newly released documents show that high-level officials knew downwind towns were being "plastered" with dangerous doses of radiation but were loath to halt the tests.

Dr. Carl Johnson, former director of the Jefferson County, Colorado, Department of Health, has studied some 4,000 citizens in small Utah towns and has found 288 cases of cancer where statistically there should have been only 179. And, he says, "It seems probable that the largest increment of cancer in southwest Utah is yet to come." Area residents say there have been virtual epidemics of birth defects, leukemia and other diseases.

Nor has the damage been limited to humans. In 1953 thousands of sheep in the path of fallout clouds died after two particularly dirty tests. In 1955 the sheep-owners sued the Federal government for $226,000 in damages. The A.E.C. countercharged that the ranchers were blaming the tests for their own "incompetence" and produced a string of witnesses who testified that radiation could not have killed the animals. In a dramatic 1956 decision in Salt Lake City, Federal Judge A. Sherman Christensen upheld the A.E.C.

But this past August—twenty-six years later—Judge Christensen vacated his decision in a bitter fifty-page opinion that may be remembered as one of the seminal documents of the nuclear age. In it he attacked the A.E.C. for "convoluted actions," saying it had "manipulated" and "intimidated" witnesses, presented outright lies and half-truths as evidence and "perpetrated a fraud upon the court." Eleven ranchers who had originally asked for less than a quarter of a million dollars are now refiling their claims. Attorney Dan S. Bushnell says they will total $100 million or more.

Charges of radiation damage to animals have also been made by farmers near atomic power plants and other nuclear facilities. Farmers in the Harrisburg area noticed what one called "strange goings-on" among their livestock as early as 1976, two years after the opening of Three Mile Island Unit One. Jane Lee, a local woman who has collected affidavits from local residents, says that the trickle of complaints that began in 1976 turned into a flood after the accident at T.M.I. Unit Two on March 28, 1979. Sterility, spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, malformations and other problems were cited by three dozen farmers. Reports of animal damage were repeated a year later, after radioactive krypton gas was released from the stricken reactor. Since then, radioactive emissions have diminished, and area farmers say most animal abnormalities have disappeared, suggesting a clear link between the accident and the damages.

In 1980 Dr. Robert Weber of Mechanicsburg told the Pennsylvania Public Utilities Commission that in his more than three decades of practice he normally performed one or two Caesarean sections a year on pigs in the T.M.I. area. After the accident, he said, the rate soared to one or two a week, with a similar rate among area goats.

To counter such claims, the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture issued a report that relied on a survey conducted

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two weeks after the accident indicating only five of one hundred T.M.I.-area farmers had complained of any problems related to the mishap. But in the summer of 1980 an investigative team from the Baltimore *News-American* followed up on the survey and found more than thirty farmers who charged that the state had grossly misrepresented their views. Their animals had indeed had problems, they said, including calves being born at double their normal size, duck eggs failing en masse to hatch, animals being born with no eyes and litter after litter of kittens dying for no apparent reason; in addition, there were widespread reports of a general disappearance of wild birds, snakes and some insects. Some farmers reported their gardens had wilted overnight. One family reported that as many as 500 exotic birds died mysteriously in its aviary in a single two-hour period.

Typically, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's final report on T.M.I. relied almost entirely on the perfunctory and inaccurate survey by the Pennsylvania Agriculture Department. Germain LaRoche, a principal N.R.C. author, says no new autopsies were done for that report nor were any new surveys undertaken. Nonetheless, the N.R.C. concluded that radiation from the accident could not have harmed animals. *The New York Times* used the report as the basis for a vicious editorial, "Goat Stories from Three Mile Island," which resurrected the old A.E.C. line that the farmers were using radiation as a "cover" to hide their own "mismanagement."

The T.M.I. area is only one of several nuclear zones where charges of animal abnormalities from radiation have been made. Similar complaints have come from farmers near the Vermont Yankee reactor at Vernon, the Nine Mile Point plant at Oswego, New York, the Arkansas Nuclear One reactor near Russellville, the Rocky Flats plutonium facility near Denver and the West Valley reprocessing center outside of Buffalo. Several farmers around a uranium tailings pile near Cañon City, Colorado, have also reported reproductive problems in their animals, problems which disappeared when they began trucking in uncontaminated water.

Unfortunately, the victims list around nuclear plants goes far beyond animals.

Dr. Ernest Sternglass, a professor of radiology at the Pittsburgh Medical School, has charged that the death rate among infants in Harrisburg skyrocketed in the three months immediately following the T.M.I. accident to triple what it had been for the same period in 1977 and 1978. The State of Pennsylvania and Metropolitan Edison—owner of T.M.I.—at first denied there was such a rise, and when the state's own figures confirmed it they argued it was merely a "coincidence." But an increase from 8.1 per thousand in the spring of 1977 and 11.5 in 1978 to 29.7 per thousand in 1979 is too great to dismiss as a coincidence. Moreover, the neonatal death rate—infants dying before one month of age—was even more striking, jumping from zero per thousand in the spring of 1977 and 7.6 in 1978 to 29.7 per thousand in 1979.

Dr. Gordon MacLeod, who was Pennsylvania secretary of health at the time of the T.M.I. incident, has also used state statistics to demonstrate a marked rise in hypothyroidism among children born in southeastern Pennsylvania—downwind from T.M.I.—after the accident. The disease is common among Marshall Island children born downwind from the bomb tests there.

Evidence of health dangers has come from areas near other reactors, even where there have been no accidents. A study by the Centers for Disease Control of seven counties around the Maine Yankee plant at Wiscasset concluded there was no significant rise in leukemia near the plant. But a re-evaluation of the same data by Dr. Irwin Bross of the Roswell Park Memorial Institute in Buffalo contradicts that conclusion and indicates a 53 percent rise in leukemia. The C.D.C.'s William Nersesian charges that Dr. Bross's assessment is "a lot of baloney." Dr. Bross is sticking to his guns.

Indications of increased infant mortality rates have also surfaced at Arkansas Nuclear One, at the Pilgrim I reactor near Boston and at other sites. Near the huge Savannah River weapons-production facility in South Carolina there is evidence of a high rate of the rare blood disease polycythemia vera. When two reporters from the Atlanta *Journal-Constitution* uncovered that evidence, the U.S. Department of Energy claimed polycythemia vera was not a radiation-related disease. But that is hotly disputed by some radiation experts: greatly elevated rates of the disease have been found among atomic veterans.

Dr. Carl Johnson has found abnormally high cancer rates among people living downwind from the Rocky Flats plutonium plant. He has shown that the closer one lives to the facility, the greater the likelihood of contracting cancer.

It is striking that it has been surveys and studies done by radiation victims themselves—atomic veterans, "downwinders," T.M.I. residents—that have played a key role in cutting through the official cover-ups. As with the homeowners at Love Canal and the Vietnam veterans suffering from Agent Orange poisoning, ordinary citizens have proven significantly more trustworthy than the government, industry or the scientific establishment.

It is important to note that there is still no national system for monitoring health problems around nuclear power stations. And underground bomb testing continues at the rate of one blast every three weeks, even though the government has admitted that forty subsurface explosions have vented radioactivity off-site since 1963 and at least one such test emitted a thousand times more radiation than was released at T.M.I.

It is essential that private citizens continue to keep a close watch on health trends in their areas and be prepared to take on the "experts" when clear dangers emerge. The "experts" have been all too willing to put the interests of their employers or their government ahead of the health of the public.

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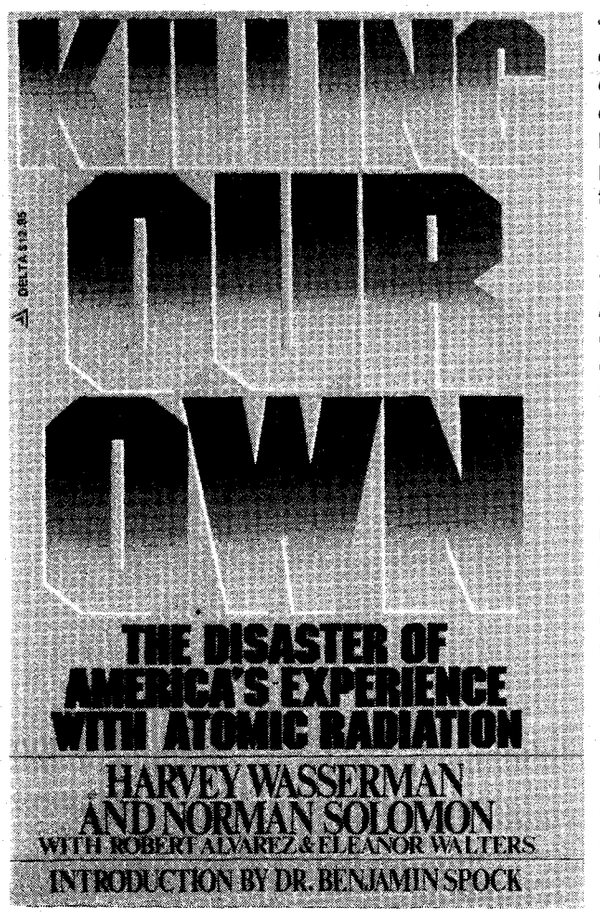
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The New York Times Book Review

"Presents this chilling and unpleasant reality in an informative and moving style."
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New Age

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(For his trouble, local real estate interests had Dr. Johnson fired from his post as Jefferson County Director of Health.) Abnormally high cancer rates have also been found among workers at the Rocky Flats reactor. Autopsies have shown high concentrations of plutonium in the bodies of people who worked there. (The Public Health Service has established that uranium miners have a lung cancer rate five times the national average.)

In 1981 a landmark lawsuit was won by Florence Krumback, the widow of a Rocky Flats worker whose repeated exposures to radiation over a fifteen-year period gave him colon cancer. The $21,000 settlement was the first claim paid by Rocky Flats' operators acknowledging on-the-job exposure, and with that door ajar, a spate of suits is likely.

The N.R.C. has conceded that the amount of radiation to which workers at atomic reactors are exposed is soaring. The increase from 1979 to 1980 alone was 33 percent, even though the number of reactors increased by only one in that time. According to studies by Dr. Karl Z. Morgan, former health director at Oak Ridge, such exposures could eventually lead to as many as 350 additional cancer deaths among reactor workers. In fact, one of the workers who participated in the T.M.I. cleanup has already died of leukemia. Metropolitan Edison claims his death could not possibly be linked to T.M.I., but his family is suing and the trial will be closely watched.

Taken as a whole, the recent legal and scientific breakthroughs in the radiation debate could have a significant impact on the future of nuclear warfare. For it is now abundantly clear that, since there is no "safe" dose of radiation, there is no "survivable" atomic war.

The new evidence—particularly the re-evaluations of the A.B.C.C. findings—shows that nuclear bombs are far deadlier than anyone had imagined. If the relatively minuscule doses of radiation released in the T.M.I. accident could kill infants nearby, the effects of doses from bombs in the megaton range are beyond calculation.

In fact, because radiation travels worldwide and its effects are cumulative, it may well be that the long-range health results of nuclear weapons exploded on "enemy" territory would devastate those who fired them. In the fall of 1976 the Chinese exploded a rather dirty bomb on their own territory. Within a week, fallout forced state officials throughout New England to confiscate milk, and radiation monitors at the Peach Bottom reactor in Pennsylvania soared so high its operators began to evacuate, fearing a melt-down. A few days later, after the radioactive cloud had again circled the earth, radiation levels rose again throughout North America.

For America, the implications should be obvious. The health impact of any nuclear attack—*even if unanswered by the Russians*—would be catastrophic the world over. Cancer and leukemia rates would soar. A second generation of Americans would find it difficult if not impossible to survive. Any atomic bomb dropped on our "enemy" is one dropped on ourselves. Our entire nuclear arsenal is essentially unusable. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Private Legend, Public Fact

IVAN SANDERS

THE QUESTIONNAIRE, or prayer for a town and a friend. *By Jiri Grusa. Translated by Peter Kussi. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 278 pp. $15.95.*

THE FLOWER SHOW *and* THE TOTH FAMILY. *By Istvan Orkeny. Translated by Michael Henry Heim and Clara Gyorgyey. Introduction by Michael Henry Heim. New Directions Books. 164 pp. $14.95. Paper $6.95.*

Fiction from Eastern Europe is often a revelation—and a puzzle—to Western readers. Because the absurdly shifting, constantly looming public sphere in the Eastern countries affects manners and mores so profoundly, their writers frequently care not a whit about sacrosanct psychological verities, and they tend to be more cavalier about fiction ground rules than many a flaming experimentalist in the West. Putting it another way, they are more apt to reveal intellectual and spiritual intimacies than psychological ones; political hang-ups may disturb them more than sexual hang-ups. Perhaps this is why some Eastern European novels strike us as being at once uncomfortably blunt and coyly evasive.

A case in point is *The Questionnaire*, by the Czech Jiri Grusa. This quirky and brilliant work would be maddeningly elusive if Grusa weren't also addicted to prosaic reality. Beginning as a response to routine queries on a job application, *The Questionnaire* becomes a whimsical family chronicle, a poignant historical novel, in which private legend congenially coexists with public fact.

The hero is a down-to-earth fellow named Jan Chrysostom Kepka, who in the course of telling us his life story becomes more and more enthralled by the power of imagination. It's true Jan was always precocious: he starts relating his life story in utero; he communes with wonder-working cats, self-consuming snakes and his own colorful ancestors; and at one point he is carried aloft by wild geese and flown over his native city of Chlumec. Jan's gift is a "propensity for seeing everything as a sign." He pays special attention to the signs of the zodiac, to the talismanic four-clover design on his bicycle bell and to the "black-olive, chrysoberyl eyes" of a Jewish forebear, a distinctive trait that shows up in all female descendants, and most prominently and defiantly in his own mother. The book, incidentally, also contains a horoscope of the exact moment of Jan's birth; a drawing of Vazoom, the magical serpent; a diagram of the anatomical differences between male and female cats; and other curious and arcane illustrations.

But no story of a life that begins in the heart of Europe on the eve of World War II can be all metaphysical fun and literary games. As a child, Jan witnesses the German occupation and learns of the hunt for Jews; a few years later, after the Communist takeover, he sees evidence of another ruthless transformation of society. Since the point of view in much of the novel is that of a child, however worldly wise, emphases necessarily shift and ironies multiply—familiar atrocities become mysterious again. Young Jan is just as interested in Herman Vohryzek, a stoic Jew killed by the Nazis, as he is in his dour Uncle Bonek, who becomes the town's all-powerful party secretary after the war, or in his Cousin Olin, who is condemned as a "class enemy" and sent to work in the mines. The people around Jan are actually quite ordinary, and his feelings and responses are reassuringly familiar—he alternately worships and scorns his parents, struggles through adolescence, has an affair with his piano teacher. His magical powers and flights of fancy coexist with his ordinariness, and this duality runs through the whole novel. We are in Bohemia, whose people are supposed to be sober and dull—"as Czech as soup ladles," Jan says of them. But we know that Bohemia has also had its share of nonconformists, and Grusa wrote this novel in Prague, home of mystics and magicians.

Jan's excursions into the past are not simply a form of escape or a search for identity. His hometown's checkered past illuminates the present. Anecdotes about nineteenth-century Prussian invaders dovetail beautifully with stories about more recent Russian occupiers. *The Questionnaire* resonates with historical, mythological and religious echoes, and the profusion of influences is evident in Grusa's prose, which is alternately archaic, poetic and slangy. (Peter Kussi's English translation is itself a feat of considerable virtuosity; his versions of political slogans—"The working class is sure to smite/Profiteer and parasite"—are as perfect as his rendering of Grusa's extraordinary descriptions of lovemaking.) Through his hero, the author is questing for freedom even when it's least propitious to do so. As an adult, Jan Chrysostom Kepka remains defiantly optimistic: "Privately," he says toward the end, "I continue to believe in happiness."

The two newly translated short novels by Istvan Orkeny are more modest achievements: their focus is narrower, their literary effects less dazzling, their messages more straightforward. Orkeny, who died three years ago in Budapest at the age of 67, is better known here as a playwright (his *Catsplay* had successful runs in a number of cities), and even Hungarians are more familiar with the dramatization of *The Toth Family* than with the novella on which it is based. Like many Eastern European writers, Orkeny was drawn to grotesque modes of expression, but he thought of the grotesque as satire plus poetry, and his stories, including mini-tales no longer than a few lines, are really open-ended parables.

The Toth Family takes place in a Hungarian mountain village during World War II. Lajos Toth, the respected local fire chief, his wife and their teen-age daughter are expecting a visit from Major Varro, their soldier son's battle-weary commanding officer, who is coming to their picturesque village to rest his frayed nerves. The major turns out to be a madman who terrorizes the Toths; hoping their guest will give preferential treatment to their son, they submit slavishly to his craziest whim. In fact, the beloved son is dead: the telegram announcing the news was thrown away by the town's half-wit letter carrier, who wanted to spare the Toths anguish.

What's so outrageous about this

Ivan Sanders teaches English at Suffolk County Community College and is the translator of George Konrád's The Loser *(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich).*

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story is not the paranoid raving of Varro, the petty tyrant, but the spectacle of essentially decent people groveling before an authority figure. Some critics have seen *The Toth Family* as a capsule history of fascism and more specifically as an indictment of Hungarian hero-worship and conformism. Yet there is something poignant about Lajos Toth. At the end his patience snaps and he kills his tormentor with a paper-cutting contraption used to make cardboard boxes for the war effort, but this act of revenge is not very convincing. Toth remains in our minds as someone who has learned that the way to weather a storm is to cower. "There are times (minutes, hours, years, eras) when silence is the secret of longevity," Orkeny writes. Nowhere is this more true than in Eastern Europe.

The other, less significant short novel, *The Flower Show*, depicts the making of a television documentary about death, in which the final days of three people—a workaholic scholar, a flower packer and a television personality—are captured on film. Orkeny got the idea for the story in New York, where he saw a TV documentary on death and dying. His explicit and irreverent treatment of the subject must be more shocking in a conservative, taboo-ridden society like Hungary's than here, where virtually no topic is deemed unsuitable for discussion in the media. But Orkeny also shows that in a society like his there is, behind public dissemblance and evasiveness, an abrupt, callous honesty—perhaps as a reflex response to public lying. The flower packer's mother, who can't wait for her daughter to die, is appallingly candid about her selfishness and greed.

Works from Eastern Europe are generally treated in the West as political sensations rather than literature. Often reviled at home, they tend to be overpraised abroad. *The Questionnaire*, for which Grusa was hounded out of his native land, was proclaimed by Prague censors to be a counterrevolutionary tract and was never published there. A Czech critic living in America, on the other hand, put Jiri Grusa in the same league with Proust and Joyce. This estimate is perhaps too generous, as was some of the praise heaped on Istvan Orkeny toward the end of his life. But these two books do speak for themselves, and what is inventive and baffling in them will remain so even after the more titillating and topical political overtones fade. □

A Life of the Mind

VIVIAN GORNICK

A MARGIN OF HOPE: An Intellectual Autobiography. *By Irving Howe. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 352 pp. $14.95.*

There are men and women who rightly consider that their memoirs will be of large interest because their lives have been shaped by a serious relation to art or to politics. Irving Howe is one of these people. Now in his 60s, Howe has been writing literary criticism and engaging in left-wing politics for more than forty years. One picks up *A Margin of Hope* eager to discover how this complicated man came to be.

Howe was born in the Bronx in the 1920s into a world of working-class Jewish immigrants whose acquaintance with the life of the mind was both crude and intimate: books, culture and left-wing politics were indiscriminately mixed. The young Irving became, easily and at once, a reader of Milton and Keats and a Norman Thomas socialist. Decades of political meetings and ideological debate were to follow. For Howe, politics has always been engagement: no other human activity has ever competed successfully for his emotional attention.

In 1936, hundreds of Trotskyists entered the Socialist Party. When they left a year later, many Socialists, including Howe, went with them. Howe remained a Trotskyist for many years, and that group's ardent struggle against Stalinism and the Communist Party became a powerful element of his political identity. Saving the left from Stalinism has been a major preoccupation.

After graduating from City College, Howe was drafted into the Army (World War II was on) and sent to Alaska, where something important happened: "Enforced isolation and steady reading together brought about a slow intellectual change. . . . I lost the singleness of mind that had inspired the politics of my youth." From that time on, politics and literature have struggled for dominion within Howe, and his life has been marked by the strain of an unresolved conflict to which he does not address himself here.

A Margin of Hope is subtitled "An Intellectual Autobiography." The reader is promised a rehearsal of the issues and events, the crucial friendships and ideas that fashioned the political man of letters. This promise is kept. The book is shaped by long discussions of left-wing politics before, during and after the cold war; of the idea of socialism in the contemporary world; of literary modernism and Marxism. But the aggressive absence of all "personal" information is an embarrassment: it's as though Howe thinks that confession is revelation, when in fact revelation is to be had in every sentence of the flat, withholding prose, as well as in the obviousness of many omissions. (At one point, for example, Howe says he moved to Princeton in the 1940s because "my wife" got a job at a nearby school. A hundred pages and some fifteen years later he speaks of "my wife" finding an apartment in New York. Howe has been married several times. Is the "my wife" of the first reference the same woman as the "my wife" of the second? It makes a difference.)

The sharp inner divisions that characterize Howe's life and work are much in evidence in *A Margin of Hope*; again, they are laid out in the prose itself. The passages on literary matters—Howe's association with *Partisan Review* in the 1940s and 1950s, literary modernism, the New Critics—are rich in particularity, always imparting Howe's belief in the significance of literary work and his love of literature. In the presence of literary men (not women) Howe is sensitive and animated, and comes as close as he can to the openness of feeling necessary for interesting description. He admired John Berryman for living "by his own tastes" and Harold Rosenberg for going his own way. He loved Delmore Schwartz and Isaac Rosenfeld, J.V. Cunningham (with whom he taught at Brandeis) and Eliezer Greenberg, the Yiddish poet with whom he spent years translating Yiddish poems and stories, and who brought literature back into his life at a time when he badly needed its solace.

Whatever there is in Howe—and there is a fair amount—of warmth, humor, affection, love of life, intellectual generosity and spaciousness, it comes into play only when he writes

Vivian Gornick's most recent book is Essays in Feminism *(Harper & Row). She is working on a book about women in science, to be published in the fall by Simon and Schuster.*

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about literature. When politics fills the page—as it does two thirds of the time—the prose becomes dense, obsessive, unyielding and belligerent. We are then in the presence of a relentless position-taker eternally making his point. The depth of Howe's anti-Stalinism is an amazement. It is never absent; it pervades the book—in lengthy denunciation, casual contempt, throwaway sarcasm. The Communists are the *Urmenschen*—all Communists; Howe speaks of American Communists as though they personally had murdered millions of people and had sent millions more to labor camps; his anger is so disproportionate as to be psychologically suspect.

After the political desultoriness of the late 1950s, Howe welcomes the 1960s, but only for a moment. In no time at all S.D.S. incurs his severe displeasure, and back comes the familiar pontificating belligerent, infuriated with the *new* Stalinists! It is as though Howe feels warm life coursing through him only when he is in a political rage. Trapped in an angry, denunciatory posture that has not significantly yielded its truculence in more than sixty years, he is devoted to the only kind of behavior that makes him feel alive. What Howe doesn't realize is that he and the Stalinists sound exactly alike, and that in the end the *way* all these people speak is more important than what they have to say. Dominated by closed, raging, polemical personalities, these are men who hear the sound of no voice that does not resemble their own, and understand no political formulation that does not duplicate their own formulations.

The 1960s elude Howe entirely. He dismisses the decade as the sum of its disabilities (S.D.S. turning Stalinist and Narodniki) and does not see that the time laid the foundation for an evolving social consciousness that is in itself a powerful piece of politics. For Howe, the gay and feminist movements of the 1970s are not politics. Homosexuals and women are not "classes," and their struggle—without theory, manifesto or party program—is unreal and distasteful. His treatment of contemporary feminism—in four pages—tells the whole story. In the first two pages, Howe says that women were treated no differently in the left-wing movement of the 1930s (even though they were theoretically considered comrades) than they were in the larger, more openly dismissive world, and now he sees how wrong this was, and he's sorry. In the

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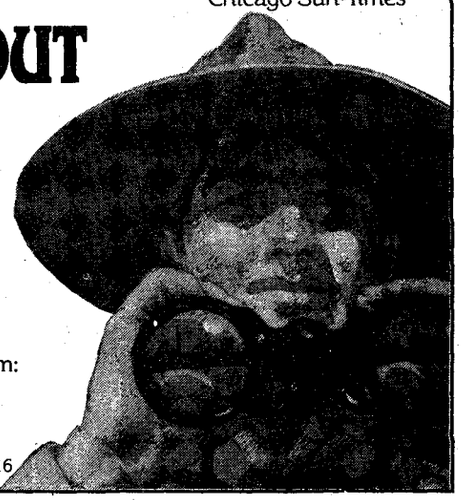

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second two pages he speaks of the feminists he has met in the 1970s, and while he admits these excellent young women do have a point, he ticks off their political mistakes and their theoretical deficiencies. In the first two pages he pays lip service. In the second two he says what he really means: Any revolution not my revolution is no revolution.

But political life is one thing, and the idea of politics quite another. That idea always cut a clear path through the spiritual woods for Howe. It gave him the way *in*, released the perspective that enabled him to do the work for which he will be remembered, and for which he can be unstintingly admired. He explains:

> It was hardly an accident that I rarely employed Freudian categories in my own criticism. I wasn't opposed to Freudianism, quite the contrary; but it didn't engage me as a critic, it didn't stir me at those deepest imaginative levels out of which a piece of writing ought to emerge. . . . I wrote mainly about [those novelists] who had gone through the ideological traumas of our age. No more, for instance, than Silone could avoid the subjects that had chosen him, could I avoid his work once it had chosen me.

To read his essays in *Politics and the Novel* is to feel instantly the far-reaching truth of these words. Held fast by the idea that makes him so wonderfully responsive, Howe reads Dostoyevsky, Conrad and James with an inwardness that deepens his understanding, makes his sympathy wide and absorbent, and produces insights that are truly memorable. (His feeling for Conrad in particular is so strong it enables him to describe Conrad's literary faults with remarkable psychological acumen.) The reader is touched by Howe's vulnerability and decency when he says of this book-loving self:

> I wanted to write literary criticism like that which Edmund Wilson or George Orwell wrote. No matter that I could never do it as well as they, that wasn't my business, judgment was for others. . . . I wanted to be an intellectual. . . . No matter again that there was something naïve—and vain, also—in this announced desire. It was what one might make of such a desire—the devotion or intensity one might bring to it—that finally counted.

Irving Howe has spent all his years in New York City reading, writing, teaching, arguing. It's been words, words, words. But *A Margin of Hope* reveals a man for whom idea is event, position engagement. The life of the mind fills these pages, and within that life this man has struggled to be serious, to cohere, to make sense of things; he has risen from the bed seven mornings out of seven to grapple, in his thoughts, with history. Such a person may not necessarily compel love, but he commands recognition and respect. □

Brilliant and Eclectic

SEYMOUR KLEINBERG

5001 NIGHTS AT THE MOVIES: A Guide from A to Z. *By Pauline Kael. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 676 pp. $25.*

In what other book about movies are you likely to find a smart, contemporary review of *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* (made in 1929)? Pauline Kael not only sums up its ideology as "Alpine idealism" on its way toward Nazi mysticism, but in around 200 words of tense, jammed prose tells you everything else you want to know about it, including the German title complete with umlaut. These notes, first published anonymously in the Goings On About Town section of *The New Yorker*, are Kael at her best: her tersest, clearest and wittiest. The pressure of brevity has forced her to eliminate what she has lately come to luxuriate in, the long, speculative, tangential discourse about films. And what economy of space dictated, intelligence has made first-rate. This is not a book to read in long sittings; it is a guide to consult (which of the three versions of *Romeo and Juliet* is worth a second look?) or just to dip into when one wants a taste of the world of movies compounded of glitz and art, low camp and high seriousness. It is for movie lovers what M.F.K. Fisher's work is for those who love food.

Kael can be as concise as this, on Jean-Luc Godard's *Alphaville*: "The picture is brilliant, yet it's no good." The rest of the paragraph tells why, but we don't need it. She's got the movie (and, for my money, she's got Godard). Uncannily, she remembers what movies felt like when she first saw them, years and years ago, still innocent, as well as what they add up to now in fallen adult life. The most valuable parts of this collection are Kael's opinions about movies made before she was a critic or even before she was born. Now we can read what she has to say about *Bringing Up Baby* ("It may be the American movies' closest equivalent to Restoration comedy") and *The Lady Eve* ("A frivolous masterpiece") and even *Cobra Woman* ("This heavenly absurdity"). From *A bout de souffle*, see *Breathless*, to *Zorro, the Gay Blade*, she wanders down the miles of celluloid, among the masterpieces and the schlock, the forgettable and the incredible, the legends and the movies no one else has ever heard of. Her taste is eclectic—she has a special fondness for terrible movies that are "compulsively watchable," like De Mille's *Cleopatra*. True, she omits *Gone with the Wind* and *The Wizard of Oz*, but what's left to say about them?

One cherishes Kael because she is never sentimental about her subject—even when one wouldn't mind if she were, as when she dismisses *Brief Encounter* as "a celebrated craftsmanlike tearjerker, and incredibly neat. There's not a breath of air in it." She's right, but I forgive her such hard-heartedness because she does not trash the movie or disturb *my* sentimental attachment to it. She's not right about everything by any means; she has many an odd enthusiasm, like *Last Tango in Paris* or any Altman film. She is much more reliable when she is contemptuous, which is much of the time.

But when she gets it right, our pleasure is enormous; her eloquence both evokes what you remember about the movie and is a promise of what you would feel if you saw it again. On *Double Indemnity*:

> Barbara Stanwyck's Phyllis Dietrichson—a platinum blonde who wears tight white sweaters, an anklet, and sleazy-kinky shoes—is perhaps the best acted and the most fixating of all the slutty, cold-blooded *femmes fatales* of the *film-noir* genre. With her bold stare, her sneering over-lipsticked thick-looking mouth, and her strategically displayed legs, she's a living entrapment device.

She doesn't need to say another word. It's all in there—the movie, the moment it was made, the sensibilities that could

Seymour Kleinberg is the author of Alienated Affections: Being Gay in America *(St. Martin's).*

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make myths of such trash and our nostalgia for all the romantic, erotic melodrama that's utterly gone.

Kael is enmeshed in the past and in *movies*—not Cinema or Auteurism, and she makes it clear what movies once meant to her and to us. Other critics that I like—Stanley Kauffman, for example—are sane, reliable, grown-up; but I read them to find out if I should see the movie. I read Kael whether or not I'm going to see it. I wouldn't dream of seeing *Shalako* except to verify her description of Brigitte Bardot as a countess in the American West:

> The woman who set the style for modern girls to look like amoral teenage whores is supposed to act high-born: she's left stranded on the screen with her smudged mouth open and the dark roots showing in her yellow hair.

Kael's rich, complex intelligence almost justifies the triviality of her subject matter. And there's the rub that's left Kael stranded: Why is a writer of this caliber watching this movie?

It's a touchy issue. Kael is most defensive when she's most long-winded, perhaps because deep down she suspects there is not much worth going on about anymore. In nine books, she's said a great deal about movies other people couldn't have sustained a paragraph on: it's been a virtuoso performance. But in her *New Yorker* column these days, more often than not, she goes on and on. The movie sinks, the enthusiasm wanes, the reader gets impatient. She's no longer talking about what she saw; she's writing about Film, knowing that what she writes will be collected and printed for posterity.

Kael doesn't like bad musicals, and she quips about *Maytime*, "the score rots your brain," meaning that it's seductive. When she does *The Sound of Music*, she's angrier:

> Whom could this operetta offend? Only those of us who, despite the fact that we may respond, loathe being manipulated in this way and are aware of how cheap and ready-made are the responses we are made to feel. We may become even more aware of the way we have been turned into emotional and aesthetic imbeciles when we hear ourselves humming the sickly, goody goody songs.

No wonder she sounds bitter. With a handful of exceptions, the movies' purpose is to turn us into something simpler, unthinking creatures dumbly sitting in the dark. Most movies are not, nor have they ever been, addressed to the adult intelligence. And writing about movies? A great job when you're young, but hazardous as the serious work of a lifetime.

Kael, who knows so much about literature, who models her work on literary criticism, who writes of movies with the kind of insight others reserve for serious fiction, can be precise about which *Romeo and Juliet* is closest to Shakespeare's because she understands the play as well as she does the movies. But when she spends just as much time examining three versions of *A Star Is Born* only to conclude that they're all bad, what we see is a civilized mind in bondage to the second-rate.

This is not a rare phenomenon; it's happening in drama and art criticism, too. The raw material just isn't good enough for the critical intelligence spent on it. And so, in art journals and theater quarterlies, that intelligence turns on itself, substituting elegance for substance. Kael's intelligence remains visibly in evidence, but increasingly one is puzzled about what she's doing with it. She shouldn't be writing about *The Sound of Music*. Should she still be writing about movies at all? How did the stuff attract a mind like hers to begin with?

Ah, that's a story, and it's a complicated romance, one of the more cunning seductions of modern times. It is not coincidental that Kael sounds somewhat different when she writes about European movies and when she's writing about Hollywood. She's better about Hollywood, livelier and more original, more complicated. The Kael whose prose leaps from the page, whose imagination is so deeply engaged that with every word we sense the vigor of her mind and the deep, passionate engagement characteristic of serious writing, is the critic of movies that have nothing to do with art. Those movies were the fantasies of a moment in history—the world between the wars—and she, like me and millions of others, is as indebted to them as she has been victimized by them. All that the movies meant as a textbook on manners and morals, on glamour and style, and most of all as a code of images of adult sexuality, Kael conveys in her reviews about those Hollywood pictures made before movies became Cinema.

Those who were truly well educated as children, who were trained on literature and for whom culture was a birthright, never surrendered to movies.

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The poor things will never know what movies can be; it's all Film for them. For the rest of us, movies were the collective erotic fantasies of a generation, and they still call forth responses so primitive that there is nothing intelligence can do except witness and articulate them. When Pauline Kael is thinking about the past, she's writing about more than movies. And when she isn't doing that, she's wasting her time. □

Direct Addresses

NANCY FORBES

EXTENDED OUTLOOKS: The Iowa Review Collection of Contemporary Women Writers. *Edited by Jane Cooper, Gwen Head, Adalaide Morris and Marcia Southwick. Macmillan. 400 pp. $17.95. Paper $7.95.*

This special double issue of *The Iowa Review* gathers the writings of some eighty American women and evokes a broad range of distinctly female experience. Among the contributors—all contemporary with the exception of H. D., who is represented by a previously unpublished poem—are scholars and working-class women, blacks, Asians and Hispanics, homosexuals and heterosexuals. Some are openly political, others more esthetically inclined, but all have been influenced by the women's movement. There are mother/daughter poems, by Maxine Kumin and others; and mother-in-law poems, among which one by Adrienne Rich is particularly frank and assured. Poems by Sandra M. Gilbert and Pamela White Hadas explore and explode the sexual politics of fairy tales. Among lesbian writings, Becky Birtha's story, "Johnnieruth," crackles with spunky self-recognition. While not every contribution succeeds, the general level is remarkably even and remarkably high.

Though the variety of the work included discourages generalization, the book does suggest at least two directions in which women may be rerouting the course of American letters. For one, their writing is loaded with direct address: speaking or remembered speech. Rich, in "Mother-in-Law," writes,

> *Tell me something*
> you say

And there is this from Jeanne Murray Walker's "Northern Liberties":

> This time I'm going to tell the truth
> about what happened
> the day we drove through your
> childhood by mistake.

The spirited oral tradition in which women have always participated, the passing-on of information and memories, advice and gossip—all that talk has entered this book, so that you often feel as if you're listening instead of reading. Tess Gallagher's poem, "Each Bird Walking," is a figure eight of exchanged speech, in which the poet remembers her lover's account of washing his dying mother and ends with herself quoting the mother in a pointed verbal hand-me-down. It's a poem that inherits the traditional female legacy of care and solicitude: the grown man bathes his mother,

> as though he were a mother
> who had the excuse of cleaning to
> touch
> with love and indifference,
> the secret parts of her child . . .

For another, in the writing represented here, post-modernism has changed character. Alienation, ennui, the "abyss" are no longer the point. The mannerist ticks are gone—the verbal cul-de-sacs, the self-absorption, the "you" meaning "me." The direction in which Wallace Stevens led a generation of Ashberys and Hollanders, the way of the private post-romantic meditation, is conspicuously avoided. As Padma Perera writes in her essay, "Spaces of Work," "it's not so much the hacks you mind, then, as the intelligent ones who have deliberately vacated themselves to shine up a surface." Sharon Olds's masterful poem, "Sex Without Love," uses the image of runners, the narcissistic athletes of our day, and her criticism might almost apply to the fashionable solipsistic poetry that so many of these women are reacting against:

> they are like great runners—they
> know it is a matter of
> the road surface, the cold, the wind,
> the fit of their shoes, their overall
> cardio-
> vascular health—just factors, like the
> partner
> in the bed, and not the truth, which
> is
> the single body alone in the universe
> against its own best time.

Even H. D., best known as an Imagist, is here represented by a late poem "Helios and Athene," which prefers the abundance of everyday language to the spare, crystalline, impersonal utterance of her early work. Such preference is explicitly the issue in Ellen Gilchrist's witty parody of Yeats's "Sailing to Byzantium," called "Clanking to Byzantium." Where Yeats seeks an uncomfortable refuge in the "artifice of eternity," Gilchrist's poem founders and sputters intentionally, ending with,

> Oh, compadres, if I could resolve
> this poem
> the mountains would call on me for
> wisdom.

So much for well-wrought urns.

Among the prose works, Gilchrist's story, "Summer, an Elegy," gives us two pubescent children who busy themselves investigating mussels for pearls in the Mississippi bayou, and wind up investigating each other. The conventional third-person narrative is so gracefully embedded in the children's own sensibilities that when death occurs, it takes a beat for us to comprehend it as tragedy. And then the full meaning descends, sadly but without melodrama.

A less successful but perhaps more dazzling story is "Places," by playwright Lois Elaine Griffith. It's about three people: Marsha, a black salesgirl who "liked to think of herself as stylish, with her processed frizz hairdo, since the Rasta look had played out. . . . She was the girl who made a leap when Cosmopolitan Magazine said take a giant step and look sexy"; Gussie, her beautiful Puerto Rican lover, who "pulls at the fly of her pants like a man. She spreads her legs a little as she walks, as if hiking up something that might get caught in the crotch"; and Tony, Marsha's boyfriend, who loves the sea and is training to be a cop. How and what these three originals think and feel is always a surprise, but the contrived and jargony metaphor of "places" weighs heavily: "He wanted to be in the place where they moved, but he was too far away from delighting in the motion of sound. He watched them from his place."

The strength of this volume as a

Nancy Forbes is a New York-based writer.

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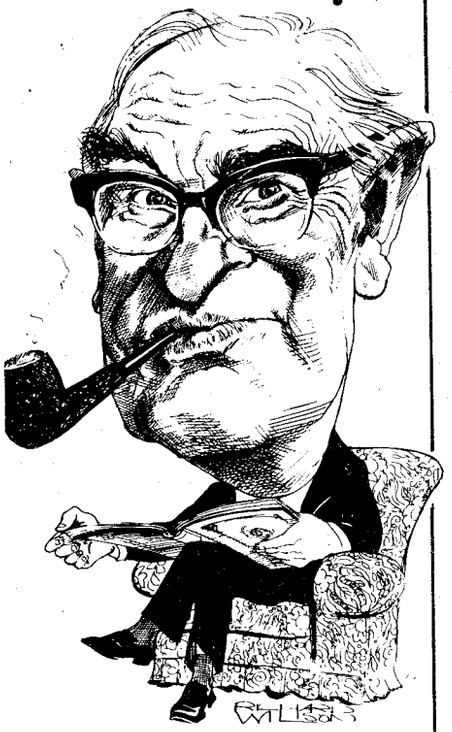

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whole is its sense of lived, felt experience. The writers seem markedly temperate and solid, having avoided both the attenuations of post-modernist poetry and the expressionist *cris de coeur* of Sylvia Plath and Anne Sexton. Whereas Plath and Sexton also present their own experience, their immediate successors represented here do so with an air of objectivity. At their best these women use a matter-of-fact tone in probing the facts of their own lives, where they are as likely to discover the nature of humankind and the universe as anywhere else. □

FILMS.

ROBERT HATCH

Sophie's Choice

Sophie's Choice is the latest of the gargantuan contemporary novels (*Ragtime* and *The World According to Garp* were earlier examples) to be trimmed to the dimensions of a commercial movie. It is as though Alan Pakula, here writing his own screenplay as well as directing, had taken hammer and chisel to the great block of William Styron's prose, chipping away tons of verbiage to release the characters embedded there, and eliminating the ruminations and autobiographical references that so vastly extend the book. For example, Pakula screens the author's opening paragraph almost verbatim and then throws out the next twenty-eight pages in which Styron rails against McGraw-Hill, a publishing house for which he has nothing but contempt.

The first assertion to be made about *Sophie's Choice* is that Meryl Streep's performance is an artistic event of major importance. Already she is being compared to Garbo, whom she little resembles in person or manner. It is merely a way of saying that, confronted with acting of this quality, one is at a loss for adjectives. The challenge of the role must have been daunting, and she rose nobly to meet it.

Assuming that the outline of Styron's story is generally known, I shall be brief: Sophie Zawistowska, the golden-haired daughter of a rabidly anti-Semitic Polish professor whom she has recently come to hate, is swept up in an S.S. dragnet in Krakow and shipped with her two small children to Auschwitz. After two years of physical abuse and the degradation of moral compromises forced on her by the sadistic horrors of her situation, Sophie is liberated by the advancing Russians and makes her way, via Sweden, to Brooklyn. There, tormented by feelings of guilt and seriously ill from malnutrition, she is barely surviving when she is rescued by Nathan Landau (Kevin Kline), a handsome, brilliant, resourcefully kind and masterful young Jew.

Presently there arrives at the Flatbush boarding house where they live a callow Southern boy named Stingo (Peter MacNicol), who is holing up in Brooklyn to write a novel that he dreams will make him Faulkner's peer. His first awareness of Sophie and Nathan is their exuberant lovemaking in the room above his bed; his second is a brutal scene in the hallway when Nathan threatens Sophie and foully reviles her; his third occurs the next morning when the couple, all smiles and merriment, burst into his room and invite him to join them for a swim and a picnic at Coney Island. Within days they have become a trio—Nathan the dark prince, Sophie the bewitching princess and Stingo their adoring slave.

Stingo is Styron's narrator. He becomes Sophie's confidant and gradually the truth of her past emerges from behind her protective lies. The facts go far to explain her feverish gaiety, her almost obsessive eroticism. She is grasping at life, blocking memory—and she has been projected into yet another horror. Nathan, on whom she is utterly dependent and with whom she is helplessly in love, is a paranoid schizophrenic, living in a world of fantasy and deeply addicted to drugs. As the tragedy accelerates, Stingo is exposed as an inexperienced bystander, too distracted by feelings of inadequacy to recognize what is going on and, when disaster becomes imminent, too immature to avert it.

Streep is almost unbearably convincing as the confused and frightened lover of a man who has restored her to a life he now seems intent on destroying. Kline, appearing in his first film, is an electrifying match for her. He makes one understand that Sophie would cling to Nathan, not only because she has no other support but also because in the periods between monstrous outbursts he is, to be literal about it, insanely attractive.

The question that stares you in the face is why, having rescued her from the furnaces, did Styron throw Sophie into the hands of Nathan and provide the feckless Stingo as her only link to endurable life? The answer eluded me when I read the book, probably because I was befuddled by Styron's spate of words. From the superbly articulate presences on the screen, the explanation comes with implacable clarity. Sophie did not escape death at Auschwitz: she brought the germs of it with her to Flatbush. There is no direct connection between Rudolf Hoess, the commandant of Auschwitz in whose office Sophie worked for a time, and Nathan Landau, the mad charmer of Brooklyn. But once the former had infected her with a will to die, she could not escape the latter's lethal embrace. Twice in her life Sophie fought to survive, but the second time she was defeated by a thirst for oblivion.

The banality of evil is coldly demonstrated by the bureaucratic Hoess (Gunther Maria Halmer) and the indescribable vulgarity of his family's bourgeois life beneath the smoke of the crematorium. But, thanks largely to Hannah Arendt, that perception is now familiar. The pervasiveness of evil, far beyond the time and place of its occurrence, is less vividly appreciated. Meryl Streep's embodiment of Styron's radiant, uprooted, gallant but guilt-ridden and emotionally fragmented Sophie Zawistowska is thus a work of great art that gives a new dimension to the worst abomination our time has experienced. □

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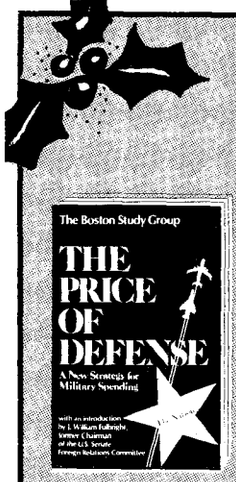

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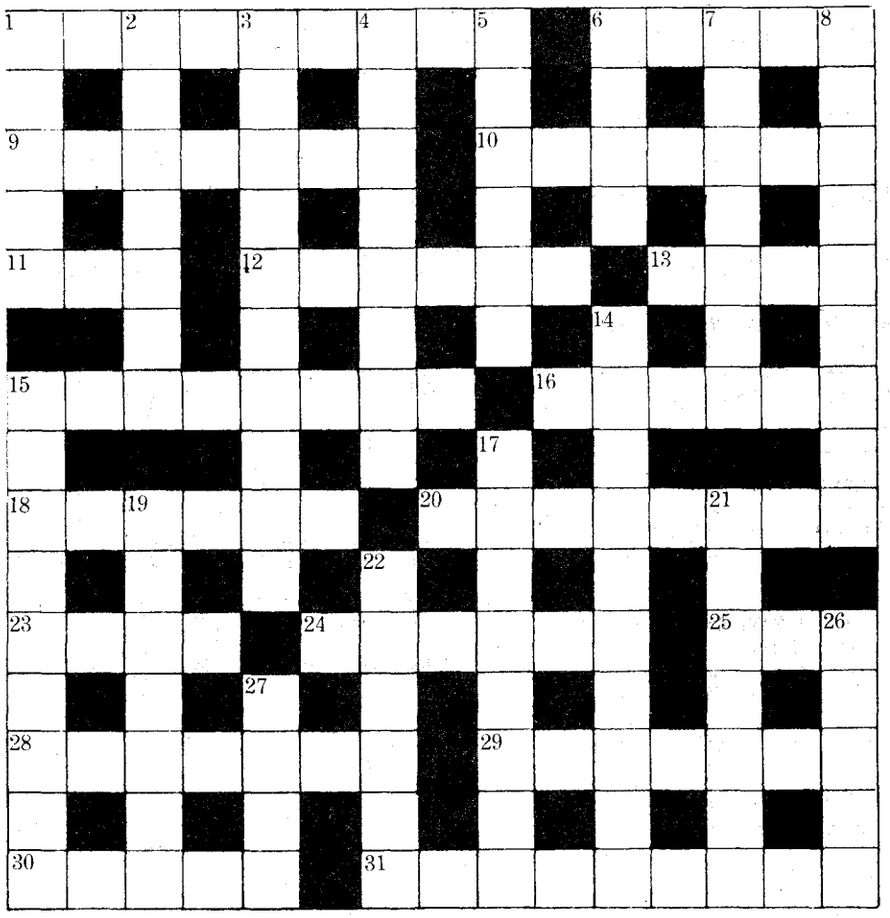

ACROSS

1 What "dele" means? Come on, tell me! (3,4,2)
6 See 18
9 A thorn, as they say, tears apart something, but prospers. (7)
0 An arrangement for trios to provide accompaniment for dinner? (7)
1 and 24 down In the rough? A plane or ship tries to avoid being so. (3,6)
2 Partly logical, a short carriage is obvious. (6)
3 See 25
5 They might be unorthodox in case this is missing, in a sense, with a plaited tress. (8)
6 Trial or business arrangement. (6)
8, 6 across and 27 down A sprinter might hope to be, while some pre-school programs hope to get your kids. (It's crazy with material sharp to the taste!) (3,2,1,4,5)
0 A mouse without a tail? Fly around it, in a manner very well known. (8)
3 Not quite twelve, and a little nap is called for! (4)
4 See 11
5, 28 and 13 That may be, but a group of totally healthy nuns should be so. (3,4,3,4)
9 You might find lots go here. (7)
0 Unhappy at being a martyred statesman, perhaps. (5)
1 Stretch too far, and the dog might go head to tail to every single one! (9)

DOWN

1 and 26 A sign that proprietors are also consumers? (3,2,5)
2 Husband, if so? (7)
3 Calling for help, perhaps, in your job. (10)
4 Proving go-getters hurt less, possibly. (8)
5 Disease caused by a bird? (6)
6 Well, it might, if producing! (4)
7 Not safe to approach, as a result. (7)
8 S-pun, perhaps—you might need a foil for it! (9)
14 Far more D.C. arrangements contain what could be offensive—or merely protection while driving. (7,3)
15 They're not exactly called strikes, but they're sometimes as effective as "taking a walk." (9)
17 Hoop-la, perhaps, for the state or county type—a legitimate object of attack. (4,4)
19 What pop should have came first—but didn't last long. (7)
21 It's a man in some difficulty who needs it! (7)
22 One certainly doesn't expect good luck with it. (6)
24 See 11 across
26 See 1 down
27 See 18 across

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